



WILLIAM & MARY DARLINGTON  
MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH



Darlington Memorial Library

8

.....  
.....  
.....



Queen's Necklace and Taking of the Bastile Series.

---

# THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE ;

OR,

## ROYALTY'S DANGERS AND DEFENDERS.

### A HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY ALEX. DUMAS.

Author of "Balsamo the Magician," "Monte Cristo," "Chicot the Jester," "The Three Musketeers," etc.

A NEW AND ACCURATE TRANSLATION FROM THE  
LATEST PARIS EDITION.

BY

HENRY LLEWELLYN WILLIAMS.

NEW YORK:  
WORTHINGTON COMPANY,  
747 BROADWAY.

---

*Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1892, by A. E. Smith & Co, in the  
office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.*

---

# THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### AN AGED NOBLEMAN AND AN OLD STEWARD.

ABOUT a quarter past three p. m., early in April, 1784, the old Marshal Duke of Richelieu, after having perfumed himself with his own hand, pushed back the looking-glass in his valet's grasp, and shaking his head, with his own emphatic air, said :

"I am looking fine now."

He got up from his armchair, flipping off his sky blue velvet coat; the white powder drifted from his wig, with juvenile briskness.

After strutting up and down the dressing-room two or three times, cracking his ankles and jerking out his hamstrings, he called : "My steward !"

In five minutes the steward came, in full dress.

"I suppose you are going to give me a good dinner," he said with the gravity comporting with the occasion ; "you had the list of guests, eh ?"

"I have them by heart ; nine in number——"

"Right ; to begin with, at what hour do we dine ?"

"My lord, the citizens dine at two, the legal gentlemen at three, nobility at four, and to-day your grace will dine at five, like royalty."

"Why like royalty, prithee ?"

"Because there is a king on the list your grace honored me with."

"Not a bit of it ; you are making a blunder. My guests are noblemen, only."

"My lord is having a jest with his humble servant, for the Count of Haga, one of the names, is a monarch."

"I do not know any king bearing that title."

"Excuse me, my lord, but I thought——"

He bowed.

"It is not your place to think and suppose. Your duty is to read the list of guests and add no commentary to the order. When I wish a thing known, I say it. When not, I want it ignored."

The steward bowed as though to a king, perhaps more respectfully.

"Hence, we dine as usual at four," went on the nobleman.

The steward's brow was clouded as if he heard his death-sentence. He turned pale as he bent under the blow; but recovering, he cried with desperate courage:

"Happen what may, your grace will not dine till five, as it is materially impossible before."

"Steward," said the old marshal, shaking his still lively and youthful head with haughtiness, "I believe you have been twenty years in my household?"

"Twenty-one, my lord; with a month and a half to boot."

"You shall not add a day, nay, not an hour to them. Hearken," continued the old peer, pinching his thin lips and frowning his dyed eyebrows, "you must seek another master this evening. I do not like the word 'Impossible' to be spoken in my house. Not at my age am I going to learn it. I have no time to lose."

The major-domo bowed for the third time

"I take leave of your grace this evening," he said, "but up to the latest hour I must fulfill my duty becomingly."

He bowed himself backwards two paces to the doorway.

"What do you mean by becomingly, sirrah?" exclaimed the lord. "Learn that matters must be carried out as befits me, here. Now, four o'clock is my dinner hour, and it is not becoming for you to dine me at five."

"My lord duke and marshal," returned the steward drily, "I have been butler to Prince Soubise and steward to Cardinal Prince Rohan. The late King Louis XV. dined once a year with the former; the Emperor of Austria dines once a



month with the other noble. Hence I know how to treat sovereigns, my lord. At Soubise House it was no use the King coming as Baron Gonesse, he was always the monarch; at Lord Rohan's, the Emperor Joseph was vainly styled Count Pakenstein, for he was still the Kaiser. This day your grace receives a guest uselessly dubbed Count Haga—he is no less the King of Sweden. When I go away this evening from this house it will be one where the Count of Haga was treated like a king."

"Just what I forbid, you obstinate fellow! Count Haga desires the most strict and opaque incognito. Zounds! I well know the foolish vanity of you Knights of the Napkin. It is not the Crown you honor, but you glorify yourselves with our crowns of coin."

"I cannot suppose that your grace seriously speaks to me of money," returned the steward tartly.

"Why, no, sir, who the deuce speaks to you about money?" said the nobleman, almost humiliated. "Do not shift the subject, if you please, and let me repeat that I do not want any more talk of kings coming."

"Why, my lord marshal, what do you take me for? do you think I should go ahead blindly? there will not be mention of the king."

"Then you will not be stubborn and I shall dine at four?"

"Nay, my lord, for what I am waiting for will not be here by four."

"What are you to wait for? fish, like that which failed to come to the chief cook Vatel and so he stabbed himself for fear his reputation for punctuality would be spoiled?"

"Vatel? pooh!"

"Shocked by the comparison, eh?"

"No, but because of a swordthrust he should be handed down to posterity."

"Ha! think you he won his glory too cheaply?"

"No, my lord: but how many others suffer in the profession like him and have to pocket pains and humiliations a hundred times worse than swordthrusts although they are not immortalized."

"To be immortalized do you not know you must belong to the French Academy or be dead?"

"If that is the case, my lord, better live and do one's duty I shall not die, and my service will be done as faithfully as Vatel's, had his master, Prince Conde, had the patience to wait half-an-hour."

"So you promise wonders; that is cunning of you."

"Not a wonder, my lord."

"What, then, I am inquisitive?"

"Forsooth, your grace, I am waiting for a bottle of wine."

"A bottle of wine? I am getting interested."

"The point is that his Majesty of Sweden—beg pardon, Count Haga, I hear, drinks nothing but Tokay wine."

"Hang it all, am I so cleaned out that I have no Tokay in the cellars? in that case, I must dismiss my butler."

"No, your grace has something like sixty bottles."

"Bless me, you do not think Count Haga will crack sixty one bottles at a sitting, do you?"

"Patience, my lord; when Count Haga first came into France, he was only Prince Royal; he dined with the last King, who had received a dozen Tokay from the Emperor of Austria. Your grace knows that Imperial Tokay is reserved for the Kaiser's cellar and that sovereigns themselves could not drink it unless the Emperor of Austria liked to send them some. Of the dozen bottles of which the Crown Prince tasted and considered admirable, only two bottles are left at present. One is in the royal cellar. And the other, my lord," concluded the steward triumphantly, with a smile, "it is stolen."

He felt that the moment of victory was come after the long debate he had sustained.

"Who stole it?"

"A friend of mine, the late King's butler, who was under obligations to me."

"Oho! so that he gave it to you?"

"Certainly he did," replied the old steward proudly.

"What did you do with it?"

"I placed it in my master's bins, most carefully."

"Your master? who was he at that period?"

"Prince Louis of Rohan."

"The Cardinal Bishop of Strasburg?"

"His residence is at Saverne."

"And you have sent that far for that bottle, for me?" ejaculated the old marshal.

"For my ungrateful lord," replied the chief domestic in a tone equivalent to calling him ungrateful.

The Duke of Richelieu took the old servant's hand, saying:

"I ask you pardon, king of all the stewards!"

"But you drove me out of your house?" returned the other, shrugging his shoulders.

"I will pay a hundred pistoles for that bottle."

"And a hundred, traveling expenses, making two hundred—but your grace will allow that it is dirt cheap."

"I will allow anything; I will begin by allowing your allowance to be double what it was."

"Nay, my lord, you need not do that: I am only doing my duty."

"When does the messenger arrive who costs a hundred pistoles?"

"Your grace shall decide if I have wasted time. Three days ago the dinner was commanded. It takes a fast rider to get there in twenty-four hours and back in the same."

"That leaves you four-and-twenty hours: oh, prince of stewards, what have you done with them?"

"I lost them, alas, my lord! The idea did not strike me until the day after I got your list of dinners. Calculate the time the errand will take and your grace will see that I have begged only the requisite time in asking the hour to be five."

"What, is not the bottle in hand?"

"No, my lord."

"Good heavens! what if your brother steward at Saverne should be as devoted to the Prince of Rohan as you are to me, and refuse to deliver the wine, as you would refuse it?"

"I, my lord?"

"Yes, I do not suppose that you would let anybody have such a bottle, were it in my cellar?"

"Most humbly I crave your grace's pardon. but if one of the fraternity having a king to dine were to ask your finest wine, I should give it over instantly."

"The deuce you would?" exclaimed the old marshal, with a wry face.

"Heaven helps those who helps others in the profession, my lord."

"Well, that makes me feel a bit better," said the duke: "but we may have the bad luck of the bottle going to smash."

"Nay, my lord, there is not such a case on record as a man smashing a bottle of wine worth two hundred pistoles."

"I am wrong, say no more. What time is the carrier due?"

"Four, sharp."

"Then, what prevents us dining at four?" demanded the marshal, stubborn as a mule.

"My lord, it takes an hour to settle the wine, and only in the short space by a method known to me; the usual thing is three days."

Beaten again, the duke made a bow to his steward in token of defeat.

"Besides," went on the chief domestic, "as my lord's guests know they are to have the honor to dine with the King of Sweden, they will not arrive until half-past four."

"You seem to know all about them, too?"

"Of course, your grace; the guests are, I believe, Count Launay, Countess Dubarry, Captain Lapeyrouse, Count Cagliostro, Marquis Condorcet, Marquis Favras, and Baron Taverny."

"You have them down properly. Where are we to dine?"

"In the grand dining-room, my lord, where you will not be cold, as a fire has been going for three days and I have the atmosphere nicely regulated at fifty degrees."

"Very good! there goes half-past four," said the duke, looking at a striking clock.

"Yes, my lord; and here comes a rider into the courtyard—he carries my bottle of Tokay!"

"May I be served as well as this for another twenty years," the marshal said, as he turned to the mirror, and the steward ran to meet his messenger.

"Twenty years?" cried a merry voice interrupting the old fop in his first glance; "I hope you may live them, marshal; but then I shall be sixty, and very, very old."

"You, countess, the first!" exclaimed Richelieu. "Gracious, how fresh and lovely you always look!"

"Duke, I am fairly frozen."

"Step into the sitting-room, pray."

"Two are company eh?"

"And is three none?" queried a cracked voice.

"Taverney?" cried the host. "A plague on the spoilsport!" he whispered to the lady.

"What a conceited lady-killer you are," rejoined the former favorite of King Louis XV. with a loud peal of laughter, as all three went into the adjoining room.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CIRCUMNAVIGATOR.

AT the same instant, the rumble of carriage wheels announced to the marshal duke the arrival of his other guests. Soon after, thanks to the punctuality of the steward, nine guests took place around the oval table in the dining-room: nine footmen, silent as shadows, swift without hurry, eager without importunity glided over the carpet, passed among the guests without jostling an elbow or knocking up against their armchairs, which were swaddled in furs coming up around the feasters' knees.

This is what the marshals' guests enjoyed, together with the gentle heat of the stove the smell of the meats, the perfume of the wines, and the buzz of the first chatter after the soup was consumed.

Not a sound came from without where Jack Frost reigned, as the windows had the shutters closed no sounds within except what the talkers made. The plates were changed noiselessly and the silver dishes came and went to the side-board without the slightest clink, while the steward passed his orders by glances, never using his voice.

Hence, at the end of ten minutes, the guests felt quite at home in the hall and as if by themselves; for servants so mute seemed necessarily deaf.

The Duke of Richelieu broke the silence lasting while the soup was on, by saying to his right-hand neighbor :

"Are you not drinking, my lord count ?"

He whom he addressed was a man of scarce forty, fair in hair and short of stature, with high shoulders : his clear blue eyes were sharp at times but oftener sad : nobility was written in undeniable characters on the open and generous brow.

"I drink nothing but water," replied the guest.

"Except when you dine with Louis XV.," replied the host. "I had the honor to dine there, and then your lordship deigned to take wine."

"You remind me of a pleasant memory, my lord. Yes, it was in 1771 it was Tokay of the Imperial vintage."

"The same as this, which my steward is pouring out to your lordship at present speaking," continued Richelieu, bowing.

Count Haga held the brimming cup up to his eyes and viewed it by the candle light. It sparkled in the glass like liquid rubies.

"Just so, my lord marshal ; I thank you," he said.

The count expressed his thanks in so gracious and noble a tone that the electrified guests rose with the same impulse and exclaimed :

"Long live his Majesty !"

"Quite so." caught up Haga : "long life to his Majesty of France. Do you not echo that, Captain Lapeyrouse ?"

"My lord count," rejoined the naval officer, with the bland and respectful voice of a man accustomed to speak with crowned heads, "I left the King only an hour ago, and he was so full of kindness towards me that nobody will shout louder than me. "Long live the King !" But, as I shall shortly be riding posthaste to reach the seacoast, where my two vessels placed under my command by my King are waiting, I beg leave when I am out of this house to cheer for another King whom I should be happy to serve, had I not so good a master."

Lifting his glass, Captain Lapeyrouse humbly saluted the Swedish count.

"We are all ready to drink the toast you suggest," said

Lady Dubarry, sitting on the marshal's left. "But the eldest ought to propose it, the 'Father' of the party, as they say in Parliament."

"Is this a fling at you or me, Taverney?" inquired the host, laughingly glancing at his old friend.

"I do not think so," said another, facing Richelieu.

"What do you not think, Lord Cagliostro?" asked Count Haga, fixing his piercing glance on the interrupter.

"I do not think, my lord, that the Duke of Richelieu is the oldest here."

"I am glad to hear that," cried the marshal; "it must be you, Taverney."

"Nonsense, I am eight years your junior. I was born in 1704," replied the old baron.

"What a bungler, to let out that I am fourscore and eight," the marshal said.

"Do you mean you are really that age?" asked Condorcet the geometrician.

"Good gracious, yes. It is an easy calculation to make, unworthy an arithmetician of your power, marquis. I come from the other century, the Great one, as it is called. 1696 is something like a date."

"Impossible," said Launay.

"Your father would not say that, when, like you, Governor of the Bastile, he had me a lodger of his in 1714."

"The oldest of all here," said Favras, "I assert to be the Tokay wine which my Lord of Haga is at this moment pouring out for himself."

"It is a hundred and twenty years old, Lord Favras; you are right," said the count. "It deserved the honor of drinking the King's health in it."

"One moment, gentlemen," interrupted Cagliostro, lifting his large head, lustrous with vigor and intelligence above the board, "I protest."

"You dispute the Tokay's claim to seniority?" chorussed the revellers.

"Assuredly, since I myself sealed that in its bottle." He spoke with calmness. "It was in 1664, the day of the victory of Montecuculi over the Turks."

A hearty roar of laughter hailed this vaunt, which Count Cagliostro had pronounced with imperturbable gravity.

"According to that, you would be something like a hundred and thirty years old, count," said Lady Dubarry, "for I suppose you were at least ten years old to have put that wine in its large bottle."

"I was more than ten, my lady, for a day after, I was charged by the Emperor of Austria to felicitate Montecuculi for having, by the victory of the St. Gothard, avenged the day at Espach, in Slavonia, when the infidels so badly beat my friends and brothers in arms, the Imperialists in 1536."

"At that date, then, my lord must have been more than ten, also, to have had a part in that memorable battle," said Haga as coolly as Cagliostro had spoken.

"It was a dreadful rout, my lord," said the latter, nodding.

"Still it was less cruel than Cressy," smilingly observed Condorcet.

"True, my lord," responded the pretender to immortality, also smiling; "the defeat of Cressy was the more dreadful as it was not merely an army beaten, but France. Yet it must be stated that it was hardly a fair fight on the part of the English. King Edward had cannon, a novelty totally unknown to King Philip of Valois—or rather which he would not believe me when I forewarned him—for I had with my own eyes seen the four great guns bought by Edward of the Venetians."

"So you knew all those ancient monarchs?" questioned Lady Dubarry.

"Lady, I had the honor of being one of the five nobles who escorted Philip of Valois off the battlefield," was Cagliostro's reply. "I came into France in the retinue of the old, blind King of Bohemia, killed at the point when he was told all was over."

"I am sorry you did not witness the action of Actium," said Lapeyrouse, "rather than Cressy. For you might supply those nautical particulars which, spite of Plutarch's fine relation, are always obscure to me."

"Name them, captain; I shall be happy to be of use to you."

"Were you there?"



"No, I was in Egypt at the time. I was charged by Queen Cleopatra with restocking the Alexandrian Library, which I could do better than others from my personal acquaintance with the authors of the period."

"And you have seen Cleopatra," exclaimed Lady Dubarry. "As clearly as I see your ladyship."

"Was she as beautiful as they say?"

"Your ladyship understands that beauty is relative. A charming queen in Egypt, Cleopatra would pass in Paris as a dark-complexioned sewing-girl."

"Do not run down seamstresses, my lord!"

"Lord preserve me," answered Cagliostro, as if he knew that the former royal mistress had been a workgirl in the town. "Cleopatra was slim, sharp, witty, with large almond-shaped eyes, a Grecian nose, pearly teeth, and a hand like your ladyship's framed to sway the sceptre. Here is a diamond ring which came from her brother Ptolomeus and she gave it to me; she wore it as a thumb-ring, an Egyptian fashion, while I can scarcely get it on my smallest finger, as you see."

Taking the jewel off, he handed it to the countess. It was a magnificent gem, worth a great deal from the purity of the water and the excellence of the cutting. It went all round the board, till it came back to the owner who tranquilly put it on once more.

"Oh, I plainly see that you are incredulous," he said; "fatal incredulity, I have fought it all my life. Philip of Valois would not believe me when I advised a retreat from Edward of England: Cleopatra, when I told her Mark Antony would be defeated. The Trojans mocked at me when I told them about the Wooden Horse, and that Cassandra was inspired and ought to be heeded."

"Why, this is marvellous," said Lady Dubarry, quivering with merriment, "I never really met a man so serious and yet so funny at the same time."

"I assure you that Jonathan was much more mirthful," said the thaumaturgist bowing. "Oh, what a jolly fellow! I nearly went mad when he was killed by Saul."

"If you keep on in this strain, count," said Richelieu, "you

will make our poor Taverney crazy, for he has such a terror of death that he fairly stares at you for asserting yourself deathless. Come, plainly, are you or are you not immortal?'

"I do not know anything about that but I do know that I am safe in saying that I have seen the deeds and been in the society of all the persons I mentioned."

"Ah," gasped Taverney, most eager of all the listeners.

"So you knew Montecuculi?"

"As well as I know you, Lord Favras: even more intimately. for this makes only the third time or so I have had the honor of meeting your lordship. while I have lived over a year under the same tent as the skillful strategist."

"You knew King Philip of Valois?"

"As I have already stated, Marquis Condorcet; but when he returned to Paris, I left France and dwelt again in Bohemia."

"And Cleopatra?"

"Yes, my lady; I tell you her eyes were black like yours, and her bust was almost as fine."

"How do you know anything about my bust. count?"

"Yours is like Cassandra's. lady, with the farther likeness that she had, like you—I mean. you have like her a beauty-spot over the sixth rib on the left."

"Oh, count. you are a magician, sure."

"Not at all, lady," interrupted Richelieu, "for I told him of that."

"How did you know it?" she demanded, and the marshal bit his lip.

He had tried to captivate the royal courtesan, in fact, but it was his nephew Duke Aiguillon who had supplanted him.

"It is a family secret," he faltered.

"Very well," said the countess; "a lady does well to put the rouge on thick when visiting you. Count," she went on to Cagliostro, "you must have the art of perpetual youth to look but forty at most, although you are aged three or four thousand years."

"I have the secret to make myself ever young, yes, my lady."

"Oh, make me young again!"

"It is superfluous in your case, the miracle is a fact. One is the age he looks and you seem but thirty."

"A piece of flattery."

"A fact. Let me explain. you have used my own process, as you cannot forget it. Do you not recall a house in St. Claude Street, in the Marsh, Paris, where you called relative to a certain move of Chief of Police Sartines? do you not remember a service done one of my friends Baron Joseph Balsamo? who made you a present of an elixir with the advice to take three drops every morning. You have followed the treatment up to last year when the draft ran out. If you do not recall this, countess, it would be worse than forgetfulness,—it would be ingratitude."

"Oh, count, you say such things——"

"Known to yourself alone? where would be a magician's merit if he only said what everybody knows?"

"So Baron Balsamo had the secret of the elixir, too?"

"No, my lady; as one of my best friends, I gave him three or four phials."

"Has he some left?"

"There you puzzle the conjurer, as poor Joseph has disappeared some two or three years. The last time I saw him was in the West of America, on the banks of the Ohio, whence he was starting on an expedition to the Rocky Mountains, where I have heard he met his death."

"Come, come, a truce to pretty talk," broke in Richelieu; "For mercy's sake, count, the secret?"

"Are you speaking without jesting, my lord?" inquired the Count of Haga.

"Most seriously, my lord; Sire—I beg pardon, I should say, my lord count," here the speaker bowed in such a way that his slip was clearly inadvertence.

"Do you mean to argue that the lady is not old enough to be rejuvenated?" asked the marshal.

"No, on my conscience!"

"Then I present another patient. Here is my friend Taverney. What do you say to him? does he not look to be a contemporary of Pontius Pilate? But perhaps he goes to the other extreme and is too far gone?"

"No," said the count, eyeing the baron,

"If you can make a boy of him again, my dear count, I will proclaim you the pupil of Medea."

"Are you willing to have me try?" asked Cagliostro, addressing the host, but catching the general's eye.

Everybody nodded.

"I, more than all," said Baron Taverney.

"Very well—it is easy enough," and Cagliostro drew a small phial from his vest pocket between his fingers slipped in.

Taking an empty wine glass, he put three drops of the liquor from the tiny bottle into it and pouring it nearly full of iced champagne, he passed the draft to the Baron. All eyes followed the operation and all mouths were open. The baron took the glass but shrank as he held it to his lips. Everybody laughed at sight of this hesitation and so noisily that Cagliostro lost patience.

"Toss it off my lord," he said, "or you will lose a drink which each drop is worth a hundred gold pieces."

"The deuce, this beats Tokay," said Richelieu, trying to joke.

"Must I drink?" queried the baron.

"Or give somebody else a chance—so that the exilir may do good to some one."

"I am the next," said the host, holding out his hand.

Smelling the glass, and no doubt having his mind influenced by the pungent and balsam-like scent and the lovely rosy hue which the few drops had given the colorless white wine, he swallowed the magic draft.

Immediately, he felt a thrill run through his frame, under the skin, from head to heel; he felt the blood, though slumbering, old and stagnant, in his veins, flow anew. His wrinkled skin expanded, and his flaccid eyes, covered with the drooping lids, were dilated without any exercise of his will. The pupil worked large and rapid; the manual tremor gave place to easy repose; his voice grew firm, and his knees, elastic as in his best young days, straightened like the loins. The liquor, spreading, had revived every portion of the body.

An outcry of stupor, surprise, and admiration above all resounded in the hall. Taverney, who had mumbled with his gums, felt his appetite aroused. Famished, he grabbed his

ork and plate, helped himself to a stew near his left hand and crunched the bones of a partridge as though his teeth had come home again.

He devoured, gulped, laughed and talked merrily for half an hour; the other guests looking at him stupefied; but gradually all died out like the light of a lamp failing in oil. At first his forehead where the old creases had faded, had fresh folds; his eyes were veiled and obscured; he lost his taste. His back bowed, and as his appetite flagged, his knees began to quake.

"Oh, dear me!" he groaned. "Good-bye, youth!" he sighed, as tears moistened his eyelids.

Instinctively, at sight of the old man rejuvenated and then older than before by the loss of the borrowed youth, a sigh like his burst from each guests' bosom.

"It is quite plain," Cagliostro said, "I have given the baron only thirty-five atoms of the elixir of life and he lived his youth over for thirty-five minutes only."

"More, more, my lord," greedily muttered the old noble.

"Nay, my lord, for a second test might kill you."

Knowing the virtue of the potion, Lady Dubarry had most closely followed the details of the incident. As youthful life flowed in the veteran's veins, her eye had watched the progress; she laughed and applauded and was regenerated by the view. When the success of the brew had attained its apogee, she could hardly restrain herself from snatching the phial from the wonder-worker's hand.

But Taverney began to age at the next moment faster than he had grown refreshed.

"Woe is me," she sighed: "I clearly see that all is vanity, and a delusion; the marvellous secret has lasted only half an hour."

"This means that to be young for a couple of years one would have to drink a river," remarked Count Haga.

"No," said Condorcet amid the laughter; "the calculation is simple. at thirty-five drops *per* half an hour, it would take for a year of youth a paltry three millions, one hundred and fifty-three thousand and six drops."

"A deluge," said Lapeyrouse.

"Whatever your opinion, sir, it was not so with me, for a little bottle, four times bigger than yours, given me by your friend Balsamo, sufficed to check the flight of time in me for ten years."

"Precisely, my lady, and you alone have laid your finger on the mystery. The old man needs the same quantity to produce an immediate and happy result. But a woman of thirty, like your ladyship, or a man of forty, as I was when I began to drink the elixir of long life, full still of days and youth, need only to drink ten drops at the periods of decay so as to chain youth and life everlastingly to the same degree of charm and energy."

"But why, my Lord Cagliostro," cried the countess, "since you might choose your starting point, why did you not select twenty instead of forty?"

"Because I was pleased rather to be a man in the prime than a young man incomplete."

"Oh, oh," said the countess.

"Of course, for at twenty, one may delight the women of thirty; but at forty, one governs the women of twenty and the men of sixty"

"I give in," said the countess: "besides, how debate with a living proof?"

"Then I am doomed for applying too late," said Taverney pitifully

"My Lord Richelieu is craftier than you," broke in Lapeyrouse with seaman-like bluntness; "I have heard that he has the receipt."

"Women started that story," said Haga laughing.

"Is that a reason to disbelieve it, my lord duke?" asked Countess Dubarry.

Blushing, though he did not often do that, the old beau said quickly:

"My receipt, if you would like to know it, is to take care of myself."

"I should doubt the receipt only for having seen the effect of Count Cagliostro's," said the lady. "Will the magician let me say that I am not at the end of my questions?"

"Put your questions, fair lady."

"You say that you first used the elixir when you were forty and began at the Siege of Troy——"

"A little anterior, my lady."

"But then," struck in Condorcet, "you prove more than your theory warrants. Not only the perpetuation of youth but the preservation of life. For if you were forty years old at the Siege of Troy, you can never have died."

"True, my lord marquis, I very humbly acknowledge that I have never died."

"But, dash it all! you are no more invulnerable than Achilles, and he was slain by Paris with a dart in the heel."

"No, to my great regret, I am not invulnerable," replied the sorcerer.

"Then if you can be killed, can die of a violent death, how have you escaped the casualties of three thousand years?"

"That is by chance. Pray follow my argument."

"Yes, yes," cried all the guests, as with non-equivocal tokens of interest they set elbows on the table and listened.

"What is the first condition of life?" the voice of Cagliostro broke the silence, as he spread with ease and elegance his white hands adorned with gems among which the Cleopatra jewel sparkled like the North Star. "Health, is it not? it depends upon——"

"Regimen," suggested Count Haga.

"You are right, my lord. Why should not my drops constitute the best diet possible?"

"Nobody knows but yourself, and no others," said Lady Dubarry.

"That is a question we will deal with later. Therefore I have always lived on the elixir, the realization of the dream of all men, whether sought by the ancients as the water of youth or by moderns as the elixir of life—I have constantly preserved my youth, my health, my life—all are one. This is clear."

"But the handsomest body wears out in time, count."

"Paris, as well as Vulcan's," added the countess. "No doubt, you knew Paris?"

"Quite well, my lady: he was a very pretty fellow, but on the whole he did not merit all Homer said of him and what women thought; in the first place he had red hair."

"Fie, what a fright!" said the lady.

"Oh, fortunately Helen was not of your way of thinking," said the magician. "To return to our elixir. Baron Taverny suggests that all things wear out. But also, all revives is renewed or is replaced as you please. Remember the famous knife of St. Hubert, so many times changing hilt and blade, yet still the knife of St. Hubert. The wine in the Heidelberg tun is still the same wine though poured out and in. So it is always clear, sharp and tasty while the wine sealed up in *amphoras* by Opimus and me became, in a hundred years, when I tried to drink it, a thick mud which might be eaten but would not wash down.

"Instead of following Opimus's example, I did that of the Heidelberg vintners: I renew my body each year with new principles replacing the old elements. Then I study all the chances and try to act with foresight. Hence, while not being immortal I know what nobody else does—to evade death coming by accident. So, for nothing in the world would I stay for a quarter of an hour alone with Count Launay who is at this instant thinking how he would like to have me in one of the Bastile dungeons to experiment by hunger on my immortality. Nor with Lord Condorcet, thinking at this moment to open into my glass his ring containing poison, all with no wicked intention but in pure scientific curiosity, to learn plainly if I should die."

The two named guests started.

"Sooth to say," replied Launay blushing and laughing, I confess you have hit me, my lord—it was folly. But it flitted out of my mind just as you accused me.

"I will not be less frank than my neighbor," said Condorcet. "I was thinking that if you had a dose of my drug I should not give a penny for your immortality."

A shout of admiration rang from the table, acknowledging not the immortality but the penetration of the mind-reader.

"You see I can guess," said he quietly. "So is it ever with what is coming to pass. Habit reveals to me at a glance the past and future of those I meet. My infallibility on this head extends even to animals and inert matter. I do not deny chance but I lessen its scope: instead of running the hundred risks of the rest of the world, I annul ninety-nine of them and



mistrust the one hundredth. Such is the outcome of my three thousand years experience."

"Then, my dear fortune-teller," said Lapeyrouse laughing amid the enthusiasm or disappointment hailing Cagliostro's speech, "you are the very man to come down to the ships embarking me for circumnavigating the globe. You would render me signal service. My lord marshal," he continued, as the soothsayer made no reply "since Count Cagliostro, as I easily understand, does not wish to quit such good company, as I may be allowed to say—excuse me going, my Lord of Haga, but seven is striking and I promised the King I should be on my way by half-past—now, since Count Cagliostro is not tempted to come and see my vessels, let him at least foretell what will happen me between Versailles and Brest harbor. Thence to the North Pole I will take care of myself. But he owes me the advice on the land transit."

Cagliostro eyed the speaker with so sad yet gentle a gaze, that most of the guests were strangely affected. But the navigator noticed nothing as he was taking leave; his own footmen wrapped him up in a furred overcoat, into the pockets of which Lady Dubarry slipped some bottles of the cordials welcome to travelers though they may not think of them, and reminding them of the absent friends during the journey in freezing weather

Still laughing, Captain Lapeyrouse respectfully saluted Count Haga, and held out his hand to the host.

"Farewell my dear Lapeyrouse," said Richelieu.

"And to our next merry meeting," replied the sea-captain. "But upon my word one would think I was to sail on the sea of Eternity. Yet I have only to go round the globe, a few years absence, no more: you must not say Farewell as though forever."

'A few years? why not say centuries? days are years at my time of life! I tell you, it is Farewell I bid you.'

"Pooh! rely on the wizard, who promises you twenty years yet. Ah count," went on the captain gaily, "why did you not speak sooner of your divine extract? at any price, I should have shipped a tun aboard of the Astrolabe, my flagship, gentlemen. Another kiss on your fair hand, lady, the hand-

somest I shall see till I return. Keep well till we meet again!"

Cagliostro kept the same silence of ill omen over his departure. All turned to him when they heard no more of the navigator taking his first step on the mysterious voyage from which he was never to return. (The last news was by one of his officers the sole survivor, who brought it after the cruisers were two years out.)

On the fortune-teller's countenance was a glory like the Pythoness's, making beholders shudder.

Haga was the first to break the odd silence.

'Why did you not answer him, count?' he inquired.

This question was the general anxiety in words. Cagliostro started as if this drew him from contemplation.

"Because I should have had to say cruelty or falsehood. My Lord of Richelieu was right in bidding him a long farewell."

"Thunder!" ejaculated the duke, turning pale, "do you say so of Lapeyrouse?"

"Ch be of good cheer, my lord," returned the count, "the prediction has no mourning in it for yourself."

"Evil befall this poor brave seaman who just kissed my hand?" said Countess Dubarry.

"Not only will he never hold it again, but he will not again see any of us he took leave of," said the magician, attentively considering his glass, full of water only, which, from its position towards the lights, was crossed by opal gleams amid the shadows of objects.

An outcry of astonishment burst from all the auditory.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### FORETELLING THEIR FATES.

THE conversation had reached the point when each minute increased the interest; the grave, solemn and almost anxious bearing of the spectators questioned Cagliostro as if an antique oracle were about to utter infallible predictions.

In the midst of the expectation, Favras, summing up the universal wish, got up, made a sign to hush them, and went on tiptoe to see if any servant in the ante-room were eaves-dropping. But, we know, Richelieu House was a model one and the gentleman saw none in the outer room but an old under-steward, stern as a sentinel on outpost duty defending the approach to the dining-room at the solemn hour of desert.

He returned to his place, nodding to imply that they were really alone.

"That being so, pray tell us what will come to Captain Lapeyrouse?" asked Lady Dubarry

"Do, Count," cried many voices though Cagliostro had shaken his head.

"You know the captain starts to make the circuit of the globe, and continue the explorations of Captain Cook, murdered in the Sandwich Islands?"

"Yes, yes, we know that," the nods signified if few words were spoken.

"Everything presages a happy end to the expedition. The captain is a fine seaman; and King Louis, no mean map-planer, has skillfully traced his route."

"At least he will make a start?" queried Lady Dubarry.

"Yes, but not yet," replied the soothsayer; "I see him lose much time at Brest. A pity for he is late as it is. Well, he sails, he lands, he re-embarks. Two years of happy voyage pass. The last news comes, and then—years pass. The ocean is vast, the sky is dark. Unexplored land rises, with monsters more hideous than in the Greek Archipelago. Then the tempest bursts, but that is less cruel than the shore where the cannibals' fires blaze. Oh, Lapeyrouse, could you hear me, I would say: 'You who go like Columbus to find unknown countries, beware of undiscovered islands!'"

A freezing chill ran through the hearers while the last words vibrated round the table.

"But why not have warned him?" demanded Haga, submitting like the others to this extraordinary man who swayed hearts at his will.

"Yes, yes," cried Lady Dubarry; "why not send after him

and overtake him. The life of such a man is worth a ride, my dear marshal."

Cagliostro held out his hand as the marshal half-rose to pull the bell, and the other sank back in his seat.

"Alas, all warning is useless," said the mind-reader; "the man foresees his fate without changing it. Lapeyrouse would laugh at my words as Priam's sons when Cassandra prophesied; as you, Count Haga, and the guests are laughing now. Do not restrain yourself, Lord Favras; 'never have I found a credulous audience."

"Oh, we believe," said Richelieu and Dubarry.

"I, too," muttered Taverney.

"And I," Haga politely said.

"Yes, you believe as long as the matter concerns Lapeyrouse," remarked the wizard, "but you would not for your own account, I am sure."

"I confess that I would be nearer belief had Count Cagliostro told Captain Lapeyrouse to beware of unknown islands. He would have been on the lookout, and had one chance in his favor."

"Not at all, I assure you, my lord; and when the horrible unmapped land loomed up, he would have recalled the scorned prophecy, only to feel death, mysteriously threatening him before, impend without power to shun it. Not one but a thousand deaths would be have suffered, for thus it is to march in gloom with despair at one's side. Bear in mind that the hope I took from him, is the last consolation preserved by the wretch under the ax, even though the stroke comes down, the edge cuts and the blood flows. Though life flies, man hopes."

"True," muttered several.

"Yes, the veil over our end is the greatest boon God has given man," observed Condorcet

"Be this as it may," said Count Haga, "if I heard a man like you bid me beware of such a person or thing, I should take the caution as good and act on it."

Cagliostro shook his head gently, with a sad smile.

"Really, warn me, and I shall thank you," went on the Swede

"Do you wish me to speak out as I did not to Captain Lapey-

rouse ? Never," he said, turning aside his head from the glass.

"Have a care, you will make me disbelieve," said Haga with a smile.

"Disbelief is better than anguish."

"Count Cagliostro, you forget that some men may be informed of their destiny, though others may be left in ignorance of theirs, for their destiny is of importance to millions of men."

"Make it an order, then, for I will obey only an order."

"What do you mean?"

"If majesty commands, I shall obey," said Cagliostro in a low voice.

"I command you to reveal my future fate Count Cagliostro," said the King of Sweden with majesty tempered by courtesy.

At the same time as the Count of Haga let himself act as a monarch, and broke the incognito by speaking a command, Richelieu rose and said as he came to bow humbly to the sovereign.

"I thank the King of Sweden for the honor he does my house. Pray take the seat of honor, belonging henceforth to none other."

"Let us stay as we are, duke and not lose a word of what Lord Cagliostro is going to tell me."

"Truth is not uttered to rulers."

"Pshaw ! I am not at home, on the throne. Take your seat, my lord : speak, Lord Cagliostro, I beseech you."

The fortune-teller cast his eyes on his glass; bubbles seethed in it as when champagne is poured ; under his mighty gaze the water seemed to boil.

"Sire, tell me what you want to know : I am ready to reply."

"The manner of my death ?"

"Gustavus III. dies from a pistol-shot."

"Oh, in battle," said the monarch with a beaming brow; "a soldier's fall. I thank you a hundred times, Count Cagliostro Oh, I foresaw that I should go into battle once too often, but Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. have shown us Kings of Sweden how we should die."

As the future-reader hung his head without remark, the speaker frowned.

"Will the shot not be fired in a battle?" he asked. "In a riot, then?"

"No, at a fancy dress ball, sire."

This made the King thoughtful. The fortune-teller sat down again after rising, and hid his face in both hands. Around him everybody lost color as well as round the object of the prophecy.

Condorcet went up to the glass of water whence the sinister augury was drawn, took it up by the stem and examined it carefully on the facets and the inside. That intelligent gaze with cold scrutiny asked the double crystal of water and glass for the solution of a problem reduced by his reason to a purely physical speculation. Not meeting an answer, he ceased to examine the glass which he replaced on the table and he said, amid the stupor from the prognostic :

"I also beseech the illustrious prophet to question his magic mirror for me, though I am unfortunately not a mighty ruler with command, and my obscure life does not concern thousands of men."

"Marquis, you command in Science's name and your life concerns more than a people—humanity," said the Swede.

"Thank you, count! but my lord may not agree with you."

Cagliostro raised his head like a horse struck by the spur.

"True, marquis, you are a ruler mighty in the realm of intelligence," said he, with the tremor attributed in antiquity to the possession of a god. "Come, look me in the face: do you earnestly wish me to tell your fate?"

"Earnestly, never more so," was the answer.

"Marquis," returned Cagliostro, in a hollow voice, making the other lower his gaze before his burning one, "you will die of poison from the ring you wear on the finger."

"Suppose I cast it away?" sneered the scientist; "that is easy."

"Do so!"

"Yes, do it, marquis," pleaded Lady Dubarry, "for mercy's sake! if only to upset the prophecy. If you do, it is plain

that you will not be poisoned by it : so that Count Cagliostro will be set at naught."

"The lady reasons correctly," said Haga.

"Bravo, countess," said Richelieu. "Throw away the nasty stuff, marquis ; all the better as I shudder since I heard you carry it, every time your hand goes near my glass in drinking together. The ring might open of itself God forbid !"

"And two glasses clinking are so close," said Taverney.

"Useless," said Cagliostro, "my lord will not waste it."

"No, true, I will not part with it ; not because I want to aid fate, but because Cabanis composed this special poison, a chance-solidified substance which chance may never find again. That is why I shall not throw it away. Triumph if you must, Count Cagliostro."

"Fate finds trusty agents to carry out her designs," said the prophet.

"Then I die poisoned," said the scientific nobleman. "Be it so. Everybody does not die poisoned who tries. You predict an admirable death ; a touch to the tongue tip and I am no more. It is no longer Man *plus* Death, but *minus* life, as we say in Algebra."

"It is not my wish you should linger," coldly responded the fate-reader, implying that he wanted the matter to stop there with Condorcet at any rate.

"My lord," said Favras, leaning across the table to meet Cagliostro, as it were, "this shipwreck, shot and poison make my mouth water. Will you not do me the kindness to promise me some such delicacy ?"

"Faith, my lord, you are wrong to be envious of these gentlemen," returned the other, goaded by the irony, "you will have something better."

"Better than the sea, bullets and poison ? that is hard to meet."

"There is still the rope, my lord marquis," said the fortune-teller graciously. "I tell you that you will be hanged," added he with a fury beyond his control

"Hanged—the devil !" cried the party:

"You forget that I am a nobleman," said Favras, a little abashed: "as for suicide, if that by chance is suggested. I notify

you that I believe myself master to use a sword in preference to a rope. You are a foreigner and I excuse your not knowing that, for a crime, *we* have our heads cut off, in France."

"You must regulate that with the executioner," replied Cagliostro, crushing the debater with his brutal words.

The assemblage hesitated for an instant.

"Let me tell you that I tremble," said Launay, "my foregoers have so badly been served that I shrink from dipping into the unlucky bag."

"Then you are more sensible than they, and will not know the future. Right: good or bad, let us respect a holy secret."

"Nay, Lord Launay, I trust you will have the courage of the others," said Lady Dubarry.

"So do I, lady," said the Bastille Governor, bowing. "Come, my lord," he went on, turning to the diviner, "gratify me with my horoscope."

"It is easy. One chop of an ax on the head, and all is over."

A shriek of horror resounded: Richelieu and Taverny besought Cagliostro to go no farther; but feminine curiosity had the upperhand.

"To hear your lordship, one would think all will die of a violent death," said the lady. "Out of eight, five are already doomed."

"It is a settled affair, all with the same brush, and so we can laugh at it," and Favras did laugh.

"We certainly laugh, but time will tell whether it was a joke or not," remarked the King of Sweden.

"Oh, I shall do my share as I do not want to disgrace the company by my cowardice. But, alas! I am only a woman and will not have the honor to make a tragic exit. A woman dies in her bed. Dear me! my death, old, sad and forgotten, will be the very worst, eh, Count Cagliostro?"

She hesitated, seeking a pretext by air and speech for the diviner to encourage her, but he did not do so. Curiosity was stronger than uneasiness and she said:

"Why don't you answer me?"

"Question and I will."



Making an effort, imbibing courage from the others, she said :

"Well, I risk it : how will finish Jeanne Vaubernier, Countess Dubarry ?"

"On the scaffold," rejoined the gloomy prophet.

"You jest, of course, my lord ?" faltered the courtesan, with a supplicatory look, but Cagliostro did not see it, having been angered.

"But one must commit some misdeed to go upon the scaffold and it is not likely that I will do any wrong. Only a jest, eh ?"

"Yea, as much of a jest as all I have said," was the reply.

"Well, my Lord Favras, we must order our mourning-coaches," she exclaimed with a forced laugh.

"Useless, lady, for you will be drawn to the scaffold on a tumbrel."

"For shame," cried Lady Dubarry, "what a wicked man ! Another time, marshal, choose merrier guests, or I will never call on you."

"Excuse me, but like the others you drove me to it," said the soothsayer.

"But unlike the others my last moments will be pacified by the priest——"

"Not so : for the last dying one to have a ghostly consoler at his side in mounting the scaffold will be the King of France."

He spoke these words with so hollow and lugubrious a voice that it passed like a blast from the grave and chilled all hearers to the core. During a brief silence, he took up the glass of water but repulsed it as bitter on its touching his lips. While doing it, his eyes fell on Taverney.

"No, I am not asking you anything," he hastened to say fearing he would speak.

"I ask, in his stead," said the host.

"Be encouraged, my lord duke," said the mystery-man, "you alone will die in your bed."

"Coffee, bring the coffee," said the marshal, enchanted by the prediction.

All rose, but before going into the parlor, Haga said to Cagliostro as he approached him :

"I seek not to flee my destiny, but tell me what to distrust?"

"A muff," was the reply.

"And I?" questioned Condorcet as the King departed.

"An omelet."

"Good: no more eggs for me."

"What have I to fear?" asked Favras.

"A letter. And you, *the Taking of the Bastille!*"

"Then I am at ease," replied Launay, laughing as he went his way

"You, countess, keep from Louis XV. Square, *fait countess.*"

"I lost my head there once——"

"But this time you will never recover it!"

She screamed and ran after the other guests.

"Stay a minute," said Richelieu, "You have not said anything to Taverney and me."

"Baron Taverney begged me not to speak and you have not asked."

"But to prove that you are a magician, can you not tell us something known to us two alone?"

"Name one?" said Cagliostro smiling

"What is Taverney doing here at court when he might be enjoying himself on his seat of Taverney Redcastle, which the King cleared of mortgages three years ago?"

"Nothing is simpler, my lord. Ten years ago, the baron tried to settle his daughter, the Lady Andrea, upon Louis XV.; but he failed."

"Humph!" growled Taverney.

"At present he wants to settle his son Philip, knight of Redcastle, upon Queen Marie Antoinette."

"By my faith, this is a sorcerer, or may the deuce fly away with me!"

"Oh, don't speak so lightly of Old Nick, my old friend," said the marshal.

"This is frightful!" said the baron, turning to implore the wizard not to prophesy his fate, but he had disappeared.

The parlor was deserted: none of the guests had the courage to face the speaker of such awful predictions.

"Hang it, we must take coffee by oursel—eh? where has he got to?"

But the little old man had vanished like the rest.

"Never mind," chuckled the marshal. "I am to be the only one of the party to die in his bed. I am not incredulous, Count Cagliostro! in my bed and as far off as possible. Halloo, the valet in waiting,—my sleeping-drops!"

And he passed into his bedroom.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### STRANGERS TO TOWN.

WE have not seen much of the dreadful winter of 1783, which devoured a sixth of the population of France though it growled at the outer door of the mansion where Duke Richelieu entertained his guests in the heated and balmy atmosphere.

A week after the feast, a fine but chilly sunshiny day, four stylish sleighs glided over the hard snow on the avenues between the Champs Elysees and the town. Out of Paris the snow might retain its virginal whiteness but the mud worked up where thousands of feet trampled, and blackened the ermine robe of King Frost.

The sleighs had to stop when the mud succeeded the snow, for a temporary thaw had set in.

In the foremost sledge were two men in brown overcoats with lined collars; the only difference in them was that one was trimmed with gold frogs and buttons while the other was silk. These men were drawn by a black horse, smoking thickly at the nostrils, and preceded sleigh number two, on which they glanced now and then as if watching it.

In this sat two women so wrapped up in robes as not to show their faces. It would be difficult to tell the sex but for their high head-dresses, on the top of which little hats dangled their feathers. From these erections of ribbons and tinselly jewels, powder fell like snow from a shaken bough.

Sitting so close as to blend their bodies, they chatted without seeming to heed the numerous passengers on the street

where they were promenading. The sleighs had gone on after slight pausing.

Through the St. Denis Gate and up to the Menilmontant Boulevard, went the four sledges, but the last two stopped at a sign from the taller and more stately of the ladies. A little farther on they came to a standstill, and the lady said to her driver :

"Weber, we get out here. Go and bring the cabriolet in half an hour as the streets are bad for sleighing and I have caught a cold in the open carriage. Be back by a quarter past seven."

Hand in hand the two went away afoot, while the German coachman with gestures of respectful despair, muttered loudly enough to be heard by his mistress :

"What imbrutence, my Gott in heaven !"

The two ladies laughed, drew their pelisses round them, the collar coming up to the ears, and listened with amusement to the snow on the sidewalk squeaking under their fine furred shoes.

"Try to read the street name, Andrea, as your eyes are so good," said the elder lady, who might be just over thirty.

"Pontduchoux Street," said the other, laughing.

"Cabbage-bridge Street ? Goodness, we are wrong. I was told the second turning on the right. But what a strong smell of new bread !"

"Nothing astonishing in that, for here is a bakery."

"Well, ask for St. Claude Street."

She started to do it herself, but the other quickly said :

"Do not go in ; let me ?"

After a moment she returned with the information that it was the first to the right.

Readers of our previous volumes in this series will remember Baron Balsamo's residence in the street sought by the ladies, where the fire started by Althotas the alchemist had burnt a portion. Abandoned to the rats, it was the blackest, most silent and closest house in the street.

On the other side, next a high-walled-in garden, rose a narrow dwelling so high as to seem a white tower on the deep grey of the sky.

The top story would have melted into space but for rays of light reddening two of the three front windows. The others were dark and silent while this seemed to make a point of showing a light.

The inner room on this fifth floor was sordidly furnished; two portraits hung on the wall drew the eye at the first. A candle and a lamp stood on a round table and on the mantel respectively, combining their beams so as to illuminate the pair. Under one was the name "HENRY OF VALOIS." And the face was like that of the Third Henry, King of France and Poland. The other portrait was more recent and the frame freshly gilded. The original was the handsome young woman, simply clad, revising letters and endorsing them at a small oak table.

Three steps from this blackeyed woman, with fine, straight nose, high cheekbones and wary mouth, stood an old servant-maid of sixty, dressed like the duennas in Greuze's pictures.

The inscription of this second painting stated it to be JEANNE OF VALOIS.'

But how could even the painted sybarite monarch look with calmness on this descendant of his? for she did not belie her origin. Her white and delicate hands were warmed at times between her folded arms. Her small, narrow foot, shod in a coquettish slipper, though the velvet was worn, was also fretted on the polished floor to warm it.

As the draft whistled in at the cracks of doorway and casement, the servant sadly shook her head and looked at the fireless hearth.

"Snuff the candle," said the lady, vexed at the kind of silent reminder.

The servant obeyed silently.

"I wish you would hunt up a bit of wax candle. The smell of these common tallow dips offends me."

"We have none."

"Seek in the other room."

"It is too cold there."

"Hark, there is a ring at our bell."

At this, the old woman ran forth, while the mistress, active

as a squirrel, thrust all the letters and papers into a drawer, and after a rapid glance around the room to make sure all was orderly, took a place on the tattered sofa with the sad, humble attitude of a suffering but resigned unfortunate person.

But her eye did not repose; it questioned the looking-glass reflecting the doorway, while her acute ear listened to the faintest sounds.

She heard this colloquy :

“Is it here the Countess Lamotte Valois lives?”

“Yes, lady, but she is not well enough to come out.”

The pretended invalid recognized by the sweet, smooth voice that it was a member of the upper classes who interrogated her Clotilde. So she got up from the sofa, as the seat of honor, and took the threadbare arm chair.

The outer room door opened and let in the two ladies who had come by sledge through St. Denis Gate.

“A lady patroness of the Charitable Society of Versailles,” announced the woman as directed.

The strangers found themselves in the lighted room where the last of the Valois was painfully rising from her chair to greet the two callers.

Clotilde pushed forward two other armchairs to give a choice, and retired into the other room with a studied slowness indicative of her intention to listen to every word.

At the first Jeanne Lamotte Valois saw that the principal of the callers, though she sat in one of the chairs instead of the sofa, with her hood casting a shadow over her face, was of a handsome and noble race.

Her companion, apparently less shy though she was four or five years younger, did not screen her undeniable beauty.

These two looked at each other, while Jeanne scrutinized both with rapidity, and the younger, on a sign from the other, began :

“Lady, for you are married, I believe?”

“I have the honor to be wife of Count Lamotte, an excellent gentleman.”

“Well, countess, we are members of the Versailles Charitable Society, for the relief of impoverished gentlefolk. We

have heard matters concerning your condition which interest us, and we consequently come to inquire into the case."

"Ladies," returned the genteel mendicant, waiting an instant and remarking the other lady's reserve, "you see the portrait of Henry Third, my ancestor's brother, for I am really of the Valois blood, as may have been stated to you."

She waited for fresh questions with proud humility.

"Is it true that your mother was janitress of a house near Barleduc?" asked the elder lady, in a sweet, grave voice.

"It is true. She was of remarkable beauty, and my father fell in love with her and wedded her. Hence I come of royal blood. My sire was a St. Remy Valois, direct descendant of the reigning line."

"But how could you have sunk to this stage of poverty?" inquired the former questioner.

"It is easy to understand. When Henry IV. came to the throne, displacing the Valois by the Bourbons, the offspring of the discrowned race feared umbrage would be taken in spite of their obscurity, and altered their name to St. Remy after some property; they figure under this name since Louis XIII. in the Hemlds' College. My grandsire brought out the true name again, though he dwelt in poverty, none at court thinking of how the son of a king was vegetating, so unfortunate had become the line once so glorious."

She spoke simply and with moderation.

"Your father is dead?" asked the younger lady.

"He died here, in Paris—but not even in this paltry place, or on his own bed. The last male Valois passed away in the Hospital."

The hearers uttered a scream of surprise much like one of affright. Satisfied with the effect of her artful story, Jeanne remained quiet, with hanging head and lowered eyes. The elder visitor studied her with attention and intelligence, and said, as she saw nothing like begging in the simple and natural sorrow :

"From what you tell me, you have felt great griefs, particularly the loss of your father——"

"Were I to tell the story of my life you would see that is the least of my woes."

"What, do you regard a father's loss a slight affliction?" rejoined the lady sternly.

"I say it, though a pious daughter. I even feel some joy that he did not live to see his daughter begging her bread. I say it plainly for it is without shame, our woes being the fault of neither my father nor myself. With the same frankness I am obliged to say that I could not wish my mother to live."

The strange words made the two hearers shudder.

"My mother married above her station. But instead of being proud and grateful for the honor done her, she began by running her husband. Having led him to sell their last rod of ground, she persuaded him to go to the capital to make something out of his rank and descent. He turned all he had into cash, and started, hoping on the justice of the King.

"The journey exhausted his purse. He fell ill and his wife who hated me, took me out and forced me to beg of passers in the street, with a phrase she taught me: 'Pity a poor orphan the last of the Line of Valois.'"

"Dreadful!" exclaimed the visitors.

"Some listened and were generous; others scoffed; and others still warned me that I was in danger by speaking such a sentence. I only knew one danger, that of disobeying my mother: one fear, of her beating me. I brought back a little money, and my father saw the day still kept afar when he must go into the Public Hospital."

While the elder lady's features twitched, tears filled the other's eyes.

"But, whatever the alleviation to my father, the horrible trade disgusted me. One day, after having run after people, with the hackneyed sentence, I sat down on a horse-block, and remained the rest of the day wearied, and returned at dusk with empty hands. My mother beat me so badly that I was laid up. Deprived of the last resources, my father went into the Hospital and died there."

"A dreadful story," muttered the hearers.

"Heaven had pity on me after that loss. A month after, my mother ran away with a soldier, leaving me and my brother, whom public charity adopted. But as we loathed begging,



we only sued for our actual wants. One day a lady, Lady Boulainvilliers, passing in her carriage, was hailed by me as usual. She questioned me and helped us off the streets. She put my brother in the army, and myself in a sewing school. This saved us both from hunger."

"But she is dead."

"Yes: her death plunged us once more into poverty."

"But her husband is rich."

"It is to him I owe all my misfortunes as a young girl, as to my mother were due all my childhood's misery. He saw me grow up and fancied me, though his wife had found me a husband in a brave soldier, Lamotte, who is in the army, at Bur-sur-Aube garrison. Lord Boulainvilliers persecuted me; but I abridge my story. Sufferings take time to tell and they make a long story for the well-to-do, however kind they are, and as you seem to be."

"Have you not applied to the court?"

"Of course."

"Did not the name of Valois, fortified by testimony, awaken sympathy?"

"I do not know what it awakened, but it never won me an answer. I have seen nobody from the court. All steps were useless. I have lost the habit of begging, and I must die like my father. My husband, as we have no children, can find a glorious end under the royal colors for his trying existence."

"Its seems to me that he will be his own recommendation?"

"Yes, he is the model of honor and has never failed in military duty."

"As for yourself, with these papers," for Jeanne of Valois had placed authentic parchments before the inquirers, "they ought to procure you a pension."

The speaker, whose movements the supplicant watched minutely, searched her pocket. First she took out the embroidered handkerchief with which she screened her face in the street from the icy wind and prying passengers. Next was a roll of paper which she laid on the bureau, saying:

"The Board of Charity authorizes me to offer this pittance while something better comes."

"Silver," thought Lady Lamotte Valois. "Perhaps a hun-

dred. It is rather short for a hundred, though long for fifty."

While she was calculating, the donors went into the other room, where Clotilde dozed beside a candle going out and emitting a nauseating smell. The ladies hastened by, begging her not to light them down with that pestiferous light, against which they had to use their smelling bottles.

"Who am I to have the honor to thank?" cried Lady Lamotte Valois.

"We will let you know," was the reply as the pair hurried down stairs.

The countess returned indoors, eager to see if her calculations about the roll of coin were correct. But in the ante-room she stumbled over an article rolling off the door-mat. It was a gold box, containing scented chocolate drops; but thin though it was, the cunning puss guessed it had a false bottom. She found the spring and opened it. A miniature appeared, stern, bright with beauty of a masculine kind, though it was a woman's. The headdress was in the South German fashion, and the sash of some foreign order gave the whole a strangeness most astounding. At the top of the box was a monogram of M and T, surrounded by a laurel wreath.

From the likeness to her visitor the money-giver, Lady Lamotte supposed it was her mother or near relative, but it was too late to call her back, and even to run to the window gained nothing.

All she saw at the end of the street, was a swift cab.

Still looking at the box, the countess determined to seek the owner at Versailles.

Seizing the roll left on the bureau, she flung it down scornfully, saying:

"Only fifty crowns, after all!" but the paper bursting, she saw gold pieces roll about. "Double-Louis," she screamed. "These ladies are very rich, and I must find them!"

---

## CHAPTER V.

## INTO A DIFFICULTY.

LADY LAMOTTE was not wrong in thinking that the charitable ladies had gone away in a cab. They had found below the vehicle, something like a cross between a Hansom cab and a curricule; the driver sitting up behind in a dickey, while the light body was hung high, between high wheels. A splendid Irish horse drew it, with banged tail and bay skin, under the same servant called Weber, who had brought the sleigh into town. He was holding the bit, trying to check the fiery horse whose nervous hoof pawed the snow, hardening a little since night was falling.

"Madam," said the German, "I ordered out Scipio, but he was laid up with a strain; and I had to take Belus, who is hard to manage."

"Oh, you know that makes no difference to me as I can drive and my hand is strong," replied the elder lady.

"I know your ladyship is a good driver but the roads are awful: Where are we going?"

"To Versailles."

"Best take the main streets."

"No, Weber, for it freezes and they are covered with ice. The parallel streets are better as the snow is still in them and gives a foothold. But, be quick, Weber."

As soon as the ladies had nimbly got in, the man jumped up behind and said he was ready.

"How does the countess strike you, Andrea?" inquired the elder lady to her companion, as she gave rein to the horse, which darted off like lightning and turned the corner.

This was the time when the lady opened her window to call the benefactresses.

"She is very poor and unfortunate."

"Well brought up?"

"Clearly."

"You are cool as regards her, Andrea."

"If I must confess, she has something sly in her face not pleasing to me."

"Oh, I know you are distrustful, Andrea: to please you one must have all the graces and virtues. Now, I think the little countess simple and interesting in her pride as in her lowliness."

"It is a fortune for her to please your Maj——"

"Look out there!" screamed the lady driver, making her horse turn aside as it nearly upset a porter at a corner.

The man set to swearing, and many voices echoed his, raising a clamor as hostile as could be against the cab.

At the spot where the road forked, the daring female Jehu resolutely dashed up Tixeranderie Street, narrow and not a bit aristocratic. Despite the "Mind!" she shouted and at Weber's stentorian cries, the infuriated passengers yelled:

"Stop that cab—down with the foppish turnout!" The cry ran on before, faster than the horse, and at Ferroniere Street, groups had formed, with individuals offering to stop the equipage. But the female coachman urged Belus into a trot, then into a canter, and the people jumped aside.

Almost at the Palais Royal, before Coq St. Honore Street, one of the handsomest snow columns, reared by the merry-makers, still held up its head, pointed by some melting away. Such was the mob to see it, that Belus was stopped. Swarms of beggars, warming themselves at public fires set there by the Duke of Orleans, came up to see the trouble and join in the shouts:

"Over goes the cab, for running into people!"

Belus was grasped by the bridle, though he frothed and capered terribly.

"Take them to the police station," yelled a thousand voices.

Inquisitive faces were thrust under the hood of the vehicle.

"Hello, they are women—fancy dolls—dancers at the Opera-house or pets of the princes, who think they have the right to crush the poor because they get ten thousand a-month to keep them out of the gutter."

A wild hurrah cheered this last flagellation.

The two women received the attack differently. One sank

back, pallid and trembling. The other boldly advanced her head, with pressed lips and frowning brows.

"Mind what you do," said the other, pulling her back.

"Oh, we are lost," whispered the younger in her ear.

"Courage, Andrea !"

"But you will be seen and recognized."

"Look by the glass plate in the back if Weber is still there."

"He is fighting to get down, but here he comes."

"Weber, help us out," said the lady in German.

He obeyed : driving back the rioters, he undid the splash-leather. The ladies alighted while the mob began to kick at the cab.

"What is the meaning of this, in heaven's name ? do you understand it, Weber ?" continued the elder lady in German.

"No a bit," returned the man, kicking and striking out to keep the ruffians back.

"They act like wild beasts, not men. Do learn what enraged them ?" went on the lady.

At the same time, a polite voice, greatly contrasting with those roaring insults and menaces, replied in pure Saxon :

"They blame your ladyship for braving the police regulation published this morning, forbidding wheeled vehicles to go about—bad enough on such streets when only mud is about, but fatal to foot-passengers when ice is on the pave."

The ladies turned to see who spoke kindly where all was threats and abuse. They saw a young gentleman in uniform, who must have fought as hard to reach them as Weber to keep them clear of the rough fellows.

His graceful and distinguished person, lofty stature, and martial bearing must have pleased the lady who hastened to reply in German :

"Oh, sir, I was utterly ignorant of the decree."

"You are strangers here ?"

"Just so ; what am I saying ?—but they are breaking my carriage."

"I am afraid you will have to let them do so while you get off under cover of the uproar. The people are maddened against rich persons for flaunting their luxury in their face,

and by virtue of the regulation, they will drag you before the police court."

"Oh, never," cried the younger lady.

"Then let us take advantage of the channel I cleft in the mob and make ourselves scarce."

These words were spoken so lightly that the two hearers divined that he was of the popular impression that they were ballet-ladies or chorus-singers. But it was no time for haggling about impressions.

"Hasten, for they are irritated by the foreign language."

"Weber," said the elder lady, "make the horse lash out while we hasten off. Save what you can, yourself chiefly, which I urge you to do."

"All right," responded Weber, touching up the spirited Irish horse which kicked up and scattered the most saucy clinging to its mane and the shafts.

In a few minutes the officer conducted the pair to the nearest square where the hackney coachmen were dozing on the boxes, while their horses were sadly waiting for supper.

The officer selected one, but he had to shake him up to get him to understand that the ladies wanted to go to Versailles. He tried to excuse himself, but the officer insisted. Then he charged monstrously and when the ladies were willing to pay, they found they had no money. They were going to offer a jewel as guarantee, but the officer, altering his opinion, held out a goldpiece.

"One word farther," said Andrea, "you cannot refuse us one more favor after so many services done. We do not like the look of this fellow, and we beg you to come to Versailles with us."

"You need not be alarmed," he replied: "I have his number, and in case he goes wrong, just notify me."

"How can we when we have not the least idea who you are?" exclaimed Andrea innocently, forgetting still to speak German.

"Why, you speak French," he cried, "and you have been condemning me to butcher the language of over the Rhine. Oh, this was hard on me."

"Excuse us, sir," said the other, coming to the rescue:

"Without being foreigners we are strangers to the town, especially when shut up in a hack. You are a man of the world and will understand we are out of our element. Only half to oblige us is to disoblige us. Come to Versailles."

Without replying, the officer got in, and bade the coachman drive ahead.

"They are lively persons who have missed an appointment and want to get home quickly." So thought the officer, while the pair were reckoning him up.

"To tell the truth, my friend," said one of the ladies in English, to her companion, "this driver goes as to a funeral. We shall never reach Versailles. I wager that our unhappy companion is bored to death."

"Our company not being very lively," added the younger lady.

"He seems quite a gentleman."

"I agree."

"And is in naval officer's uniform; all the naval officers are of good families; it suits him well and he is a handsome fellow, think you not so?"

The other was about to agree with her when the officer held up his hand to check her, saying, in excellent English:

"Pardon me, ladies, but I am bound to say that I know English from having cruised in the Channel; but I do not know Spanish, and if you do, be sure that I could not follow you if you liked to chat in that tongue."

"Sir, we did not scandalize you," returned the lady, merrily "as you were aware; so let us dance no longer in fetters but speak in French."

"Thank you; but if my presence hampers you——"

"You cannot suppose so, as we desired it——"

"Required it," corrected the other.

"Overlook my short indecision; but Paris is so full of man traps that——"

"Oh, you took us for mantraps!"

"Oh, I swear that no such an idea ever entered my head," answered the officer, bowing.

But the ice had formed again, and the journey continued

in silence, except for the ladies muttering to each other. All their companion caught was some broken sentences such as : " So late—the gates will be shut—what excuse for our going out ?"

The vehicle stopped ; in three hours the old nag had pulled through, and the driver, bending down to the window, said : " Here we are, master."

How had time been so short ?

" Drive to Armes Square," repeated the gentleman after the ladies' cue.

Then he said to himself, " I must open my mouth or be taken for a gaby. Ladies, you are at home, now," he began ; " but the Armes Square is not a residence and I suppose you can allow to see you to your door the Count of Charny, officer in the royal navy ?"

" Charny ? we shall not forget it or your kindness."

" George Charny, Princes' Hotel, Richelieu Street."

" George," muttered the younger lady.

" Do not leave the coach," cried the other lady sharply.

" But you cannot walk on in the dark, unattended !"

" Count, we thank you from the bottom of our heart, but, as you are a gallant gentleman, we ask you to close that door and make the man drive you back to Paris, without looking after us."

" Driver, turn and get away to town !"

As the carriage rolled away, the sybarite sighed like a youth in love and laid himself along the cushions warm with the strangers' pressure.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SPECIAL REGULATION.

THE ladies did not move till the hack had disappeared, when they proceeded towards the royal residence. A rough breeze brought to their ears the sound of a church clock.

" A quarter to twelve," cried the pair in unison.

" All the gates will be locked," added the younger.

" That matters not, my dear Andrea, for we would not have



gone in at the principal gate, anyway ; let us go to the private one."

On the right of Versailles Palace is a private entrance, but the door was closed.

"Do not knock, but call Laurent ; I bade him wait, fearing we might be late."

Andrea approached the entrance where a man's voice challenged her.

"Heavens, that is not Laurent's voice !" in fright.

"Call him just the same."

"Laurent !"

"There is no Laurent here," replied the rough voice : "I don't care a hang for any Laurents. I have my orders."

"Who are you, then ?"

"Who are you, if it comes to that ?"

It was saucy but they could not be dainty.

"We are ladies of her Majesty's household, lodging in the palace and we want to get to our rooms."

"I am a Swiss soldier in the First Company, Salischamade Regiment, and unlike Laurent, I will keep you from coming in."

"We will give you twenty louis to get in."

"And I will get ten years in irons—thank you for nothing!"

"You shall be made a corporal."

"And he who gave me the orders to lock out will have me shot."

"Who was it ?"

"The King."

"The King," repeated both women. "We are lost."

The younger one seemed distracted, while the other said :

"It is a settled thing ; all the doors will be guarded. This is a dirty trick of the King, Andrea," said she with a threatening gesture.

"This man cannot be posted here all night," said the younger recovering courage as the other lost hers : "the guard replacing him may be less rigid. Let us wait an hour."

"But the patrol will catch me here, skulking—oh, it is shameful ! Andrea, the blood is rushing into my head, and I shall die of suffocation."

At the same time, on the dry, white pavement was heard a light step where few steps were sounding now, and a gay and airy voice sang one of those mannered lovesongs of the period.

"That voice—it is my brother's," exclaimed the elder lady, waiting for the man to come up and touching him on the shoulder.

"The Queen!" he exclaimed, drawing back a step and taking off his hat.

"Hush, I am not alone, but with Mdlle. Taverney."

"Coming out at this hour?"

"No, wanting to get in."

"Why not have called to Laurent?"

"We have, but he is replaced by a soldier who refuses money and promotion to break the royal order to keep the door closed."

"I will raise a racket and while they let me, a prince of the blood, go through, you can slip by."

"No, any noise will injure me. To-morrow dreadful scandal would hail an innocent matter. Some enemy besides the King has done this; I know it well."

"Of course; it is the Count of Provence, who hates vouth, beauty and all that he has not. An unworthy brotner: out you cannot stay out in weather to freeze a wolf's nose. So come to my private house for the night. I have no servants and yet you will find all the things in readiness. The order to lock out all comers will go off in the morning, so you can get in after six. If you want to disguise yourselves you will find wrappers of all sorts in the clothes-presses; thus you can get to your rooms."

"But we shall be driving you out in the cold!"

"I shall find a house—I have three establishments like this."

"No wonder Countess Artois is miserable about her husband," said the Queen with a laugh. "I shall tell her," she added, with her finger held up in mock threat.

"Then I shall tell the King," replied Artois, ringing a bell at a door, which opened without a hand, and closed after the two ladies in the same mysterious way.

## CHAPTER VII.

## REFUSING THE NECKLACE.

EARLY in the morning, for the Queen and her companion had not gone to rest until two A. M., the King, in plain dress, almost as he got up, came to knock at the Queen's door. He was told that she was fast asleep, but he pushed past all obstacles, and entered the next to the bed-room, where the first lady of the bedchamber Lady Misery, was on guard.

"The Queen sleeps?" he said.

"I cannot say that much, sire, but she is still in bed."

He entered the sleeping apartment, lighted by a subdued lamp, with white silk curtains, embroidered with gold lilies, shadowing the ruffled bed.

"Oh, Lady Misery, you are so noisy, you have roused me suddenly," cried the Queen. "Oh, it is not you—it is the King!"

"Good morning, Antoinette," said the monarch, in a voice half sweet, half bitter.

"What good wind has blown you here? open the windows, there!"

The ladies in attendance let in light and air, according to Marie Antoinette's good habit, and she inhaled the freshness with relish.

"You sleep soundly," said the King, sitting down near the bed after a searching look round.

"Yes, I sat up rather late, reading, and I should still be sleeping but for your waking me."

"How was it that you would not see company last evening?"

"Oh, the Count of Provence?" she retorted with presence of mind anticipating the King's suspicions. "Was he told I was not in? Lady Misery?" continued Marie Antoinette, carelessly, the lady held out on a silver platter the morning's mail.

"Sire," said the Mistress of the Household while her lady opened her letters, "the Count of Provence called last even-

ing, but I answered that her Majesty was not receiving, by her Majesty's command."

During this, the Queen had found a note: "You got back from Paris at eight when Laurent saw you come in." With the same carelessness, she looked at half-a-dozen other letters, notes and petitions which she strewed on the down coverlet.

"You may go, Lady Misery. My lord, am I free to see the Count of Provence or not?"

"Perfectly free · but——"

"His amazing brain is too much for poor me · it fatigues me. Besides, he does not like me. I pay him back in his own coin, as for that. So, I went to bed to read when I expected his unwelcome call. What is the matter, sire—you look doubting."

"I understood you were in town at the hour when you assert you were abed."

"Of course I was in Paris, but I was back by—Lady Misery: at what time did I get back from Paris?"

"About eight," was the reply.

"You mistake," said the King "ask some one else."

But all the servants and ladies stuck to it that the Queen had returned at eight.

Left alone together, the King seemed ashamed before his wife, but she did not enjoy the triumph.

"Sire," said she abruptly, "a Queen of France should never tell a lie. I did not come home last night at eight o'clock, but this morning at six."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the astonished man.

"Had it not been for your brother Artois who offered me hospitality, I should have been homeless in the blast like a beggar."

"Oh, you were out? then I was right," observed the King, with a gloomy air.

"Sire, you draw a conclusion like an arithmetician working out a sum, not like a gallant gentleman. To assure yourself about my goings and comings you need not question the servants but put it to me squarely: "Was I out or not?" I see you are ashamed of having used brutal means against your

wife. They are shameful towards a queen, unseemly in a gentleman, and I am not refusing myself the satisfaction of telling you so."

"I can easily excuse my conduct," replied the monarch. "Is there anybody in the palace who suspects that you did not return home? Thinking this, none will ascribe my order about closing doors to be applied to you. I shall not bother it if it be attributed to the disorderly conduct of Count Artois or another. I was right, in short, in saving appearances, and also if in giving you a lesson quietly it is profited by. I am not going to gainsay anything I have done."

The hearer had calmed gradually while her royal consort spoke; not less irritated, but wishful to keep her strength for the struggle which would break out anew though seemingly finished.

"Very well," she said. "So, you do not excuse yourself for keeping locked out of your house the daughter of Maria Theresa, your wife, the mother of your children, like any common woman? you look on it as a royal jest, full of Attic salt, with morality to double the zest. It is perfectly natural to force your wife to stay all night in one of the snuggeries where Count Artois receives the Opera dancers and the bad women of the court. Pooh, this is nothing—a king soars over such petty matters, a philosophical king more than the others. For you are a philosopher. But mark that Artois has played the handsome part. He has done me signal services. I have to thank heaven that my brother-in-law is a dissipated rake whose bad habits mantled my disgrace and whose vices saved my honor."

The King blushed and noisily fidgeted on his chair.

"Oh, we all know you are a virtuous monarch," bitterly laughed the Queen. "But have you thought what result your morality will reach? you say nobody knew of my return. Do you believe that? Will Provence, who hunted you on, believe the story? Will my attendants, who lied to you just now? will Laurent, bribed by Artois and myself? Granting the King is always right, the Queen is sometimes so. Keep on, you hiring spies and watchmen, and me bribing them, and I warn you, for you know me as not bearing the curb well—"

before a month, we will see what has become of the majesty of the throne and the dignity of married life."

Evidently the outburst had deep effect on the hearer.

"You know I am sincere," replied he, "and I own my wrongs. Will you prove that you were right to go sleighing out of Versailles, in a happy-go-lucky party, entangling you in grave matters in such a crisis as this? Prove that you were right to drop them in Paris as in carnival times, and not to come home till very late at night, scandalously late, while my lamp had burnt out at labor, and all honest folk were asleep. You talk of the majesty of the throne and martial dignity! Is what you did becoming to wife, mother, and queen?"

"Two words will answer you," and they will be disdainfully spoken, more so than heretofore, because some part of your accusation deserves disdain. I went from here in a sleigh because I wanted to get to town quickly, I took Mdlle. Taverney with me—one whose reputation is the purest in the court,—to Paris, to see with my own eyes if it were true that this monarch, the father of the kingdom, philosopher, moral supporter of all consciences, who feeds the poor foreigners, warms the beggars, and justifies the people's love by his benevolence,—leaves to die of hunger, crouched in neglect, exposed to vice and misery, one of his family of kings—a descendant of one of the lines governing France. I went up into a loft, and found without fire or light or food the great grand-daughter of a great prince; I gave a hundred gold pieces to this victim of royal neglect and forgetfulness. And as I came home in a hackney carriage, for the streets were bad for sleighing——"

"In a hired cab," muttered the sovereign, swinging his right leg, perched upon the left knee, in his usual token of impatience, "a queen in a hack!"

"Ay, and very glad to find one," replied the royal lady.

"You acted properly, Marie," said the other; "you always have noble impulses but too lightly unfolded; a fault lying in the warmth of generosity distinguishes you."

"Thanks," she mockingly replied.

"Remember that I have not suspected you of anything

but what is straight and honorable," continued the King "Your action and the risky behavior of a queen, are what displeases me; you have done good as you often do, but you have hurt yourself in benefiting others. I reproach you for this. But I have to repair some omission to watch over the offspring of kings. I am ready to name the unfortunates, and my tribute will not be lacking."

"The name of Valois is illustrious enough, Sire, to be present in your mind."

"Oh, now I know how you have been swindled, roared Louis in laughter. "That little Valois intrigante, whose husband is a common soldier: who stirs earth and heaven, overwhelming the ministers, pestering her aunts crushing me with appeals, demands, petitions, genealogical proofs——"

"Do they not show she is a Valois?"

"I believe she is one."

"Then give her an allowance, a regiment to her husband, and some position for one of royal strain."

"Gently! how you run on. Little Valois plucks enough feathers out of us not to have you help her. She has a sharp beak, I can tell you. A position for a daughter of the Crown who descends to begging letters! We kings are nowadays beneath the rich private individuals. The Duke of Orleans has sent his stables to England for sale, and I have put down my wolf-hounds. We are all in privation, my darling."

"But yet a Valois must not starve to death."

"You said you gave her some gold."

"Do no less."

"No, you treated her royally, it is enough for us both."

"A pension, then."

"Not at all, nothing settled. These are a race of rats. When I give, I give without binding myself for the future, and only when I am in funds. This little Valois—but I cannot tell you all I know about her. Your good heart has been trapped, my dear Antoinette. I beg your pardon sincerely."

She was going to let him kiss her hand but suddenly withdrew it, saying:

"No, I bear you a grudge. You are not kind to me, in barring the doors upon me. And then, to burst into my bed-

room at half-past six in the morning with furious eyes!"

"What can I do to prove, what give you, that I had no ill feeling against you when I came to see you? Stay, I have the proof in my pocket."

And with a kindly smile he drew out a jewel-case which the Queen had no sooner opened on the bed than she screamed in her bewilderment and excitement.

"God bless us, what a beautiful necklace!"

The diamonds on the string were so lustrous and nicely assorted that she seemed to have a stream of phosphorescence flame through her hands. The necklace undulated like a fiery serpent with a lightning flash in every scale.

"Magnificent," said the Queen her eyes sparkling with its luminosity or at thinking no woman in the world would carry off the gems so becomingly as she might.

"Yes, the jewellers who made this are artists. Only Boehmer and Bossange dare to undertake such masterpieces of their craft. But let me have the pleasure of putting it on your neck."

He held up the open ends with a clasp of a larger diamond than the rest, to secure the snap.

"No," she said, "I must refuse to hang around my neck a collar worth a million and a half, I judge, when the King has no money and must curtail his alms-giving. Lord Sartines said the other day that a vessel of the line cost no more than such a jewel, and the King more needs a man-of-war than his queen does a gewgaw."

"Oh," exclaimed Louis at the summit of joy, "you act sublimely! Thank you, Marie Antoinette, you are a darling woman." He threw his arms round her and kissed her heartily. "You have said what will be treasured in history. France will bless you when it hears what you said in rejecting the diamond necklace. I will order the ship of war to be built and she shall be named 'The Queen's Necklace.' You shall christen her, my dear. I will send her to Lapeyrouse."

He kissed her again and went out joyously, with the jewel.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE QUEEN WITH A MEMORY.

HARDLY had the King departed than his wife rose and went to the window to inspire the sharp, chilly morning air. Day was announcing the charm in some spring weather when the sunshine succeeds the April-night frost, and the wind had shifted from north to east.

If it kept so, the terrible winter of 1784 would be at an end.

"We shall have to make haste if we want to take advantage of the frost," remarked she. "I have long wanted to skate on the Swiss Lake, and to-morrow will be too late. Learn if Mdlle. Taverney is up yet——"

"She has been in the ante-room some twenty minutes."

Marie Antoinette was surprised, knowing what should have made her favorite sleep.

Andrea de Taverney entered as the clock was striking nine. Dressed with care, for no lady of honor ought to be seen in negligé by her sovereign, Andrea was smiling, but somewhat uneasy

"Send me the hairdresser and my tailor," said the Queen to Lady Misery. "Nothing to be distressed about," she proceeded when she and her confidante were alone. "The King was in good humor; he was disarmed and I made him laugh. When one is not wrong, and is a queen one must tell the truth. But we appear to have done one matter badly."

"More than one, no doubt," said Andrea.

"Possibly: the prime one was in helping Countess Lamotte Valois. The King does not like her, though I say that she pleased me."

Leonard, the hairdresser, came in and, as the Queen had fine hair and liked to admire it, he gave her time to do so. She was delighted with her beauty and handed the mirror to Andrea to whom she gave affectionate glances.

"Lucky one, never to be scolded," she said; "proud and independent, whom everybody is a little afraid of because you

are wise like Minerva; you are the curfew-belle for the rattle-brains of the court. How happy you ought to be as a maid."

Andrea blushed and her smile was mournful.

"I made a vow."

"Still, my pretty vestal virgin, you have a master since yesterday."

"A master?"

"Yes, your brother: what is his name?"

"Philip. Yes, he did arrive yesterday, as your Majesty kindly tells me."

"But you have not seen him yet? selfish woman that I am to take you away from him to Paris: upon my word, it is unpardonable."

"Oh, I forgive you with all my heart and so does Philip, said Andrea smiling "I can answer for him."

"Is he still a fine blade?"

"Still good and handsome."

"How old is he now?"

"Thirty-two."

"Poor knight, I have known him some fourteen years and yet have lost sight of him these nine or ten."

"When your Majesty is good enough to receive him, he will assure you that absence has not weakened the respectful devotion he vowed you. In a quarter of an hour he could be at your feet."

"I permit it—I mean, desire it."

When Andrea returned with her brother, she found that Count Artois had come to see how the Queen had passed the night.

Philip Taverney, Knight of Redcastle, was a handsome dark complexioned officer, with black eyes deeply impressed with nobility and sadness: a vigorous soldier with intelligent brow and stern bearing as in the Old Colonial portraits by Stuart or Trumbull. He wore a dark grey suit, finely embroidered with silver, so dark as to seem black and steel; the white neckcloth and ruffles were dead in tone, and the white powder on the hair set off the complexion and manly features.

He saluted the Queen, on his sister's introduction, with slowness and gravity. She had the beauty of power and the

power of beauty, and when she turned, Philip, feeling that she smiled and that her limped eye, as clear as haughty, fell upon him, turned pale. His whole face showed the keenest emotion.

"I thank you for giving me your first visit," said the Queen.

"Your Majesty forgets kindly that I owed her thanks."

"How much time has passed since we met?" went on the royal lady; "the finest part of life, alas!"

'For me, but not for you whose days are all sunny."

"You must have become fond of America to stay so long away, when the other Frenchmen returned?"

"When General Lafayette quitted the New World," replied Colonel Taverney, "he needed a trusty officer to keep command of the auxiliary forces. He proposed me to General Washington who was good enough to accept me."

"It appears that the New World sends you home a hero," went on the lady.

"Your Majesty is alluding to others than me," said he smiling."

"Why not of you?" she replied, and turning to Count Artois, she proceeded: "Look, brother, at the comely presence and the martial port of Colonel Taverney."

"A splendid officer," said the young prince. "A noble whose acquaintance I am rejoiced to make. What are your intentions in returning to your native country?"

"Please your highness, my sister's interests overrule mine; I am going to do anything she directs."

"You have a father living in the Baron Taverney, I believe," said the prince.

"We are fortunate in having still our father," replied the volunteer in the American Revolutionary War.

"Never mind," interrupted the Queen: "I like Andrea better to be under her brother's protection, and her brother patronized by your highness. You will take care of Colonel Taverney, eh, brother?"

Artois nodded.

"Let me tell you that we are bound to them. This Taverney was the first Frenchman who welcomed me to France and I promised to make him happy."

Philip felt the color rise and he bit his lip while he exchanged with Andrea a look which made her droop her head. The Queen caught this glance, but she could not divine the family tragedy which the brother and sister concealed. She attributed the sorrow to another cause. When in 1744, all Frenchmen had fallen in love with the bride of their crown prince, why might not Philip have had a touch of the epidemic? Nothing made the supposition unlikely—not a glance at her mirror. So she thought that the brother had confided to his sister some story of his exalted love. She smiled on him and addressed his sister one of her fondest looks. In this innocent conceit, see no crime! The Queen was a woman and took glory in being adored.

"Truly," said Count Artois, approaching Taverney, "is this Washington a great general?"

"A great man, my lord."

"What are the French doing out there?"

"As much good as the English did harm."

"You are a partisan of the new run of things, Colonel Taverney. Have you reflected that, in fighting the English and the Red Indians there, you were against the French monarchy?"

"Alas, my lord!"

"Hence I am not over-joyful at the victories of Washington and Lafayette. It is egotism, but not for myself alone. Yet I shall aid you all I can. You have bravely borne the French colors and you have not set your trumpeter going in Paris. I like you because you are not known here: and I am selfish enough to wish you attached to our flag at home, too."

He kissed the Queen's hand merrily, saluted Andrea affably, more respectfully than he would most women, and disappeared by the opening door.

"It is superb weather," exclaimed the Queen turning quickly from chatting with Andrea, "Get me a sledge, Lady Misery! the ice will be melted in another day. Quick, my chocolate, for the fine weather will crowd the skating-rink on the Swiss Lake."

"Does your Majesty intend to skate?" inquired Philip.

"To have you make fun of us," replied she: "you who have

been on rivers fifty miles across and made more leagues on the unmarred great lakes than we can go yards."

"Here it is amusement to skate: there they have to travel miles to keep from death by the winter."

"Here comes the chocolate. Take a cup, Andrea."

The maid of honor blushed with pleasure at the honor and courtseyed.

"You see, I am just the same, still holding *etiquet* in horror. Are you changed?"

These words went to his heart; a woman's regret is a stab for a worshipper.

"No, your Majesty, I have not changed—not in my heart at least." He spoke curtly.

"Then we will thank the good heart by warming it with chocolate before it goes into the cold again. Lady Misery, another cup, for Colonel Taverney."

"Oh, think of such an honor to a poor obscure soldier like me," cried Philip.

"To an old friend, rather," was the reply. "This day all the spirit of youth flies to my brain. I am happy, proud, free and wild. It reminds me of my life at Trianon and the sport we had there, Andrea and me. But why are you so sad, Andrea? and you so pale, Colonel Philip?"

The two Taverneys had cowered under a painful remembrance.

But they recovered courage at the inquiry.

"The chocolate burnt my palate," stammered Andrea.

"And I am still overwhelmed by the honor done me as if I were a mighty nobleman," added Philip.

"Go on, you are, as a soldier, accustomed to fire," rejoined Marie Antoinette merrily: "so the chocolate will not scorch you. Drink quickly for I have no time to spare."

When the Queen was wrapped in her ermine cloak, she said:

"Colonel Taverney, I mean to make an American hero my captive for the day. Keep on my right side."

Andrea took the speaker's left.

As all heads bent at the passing of the Queen, sparkling with beauty, a little old gentleman stared, to the forgetfulness of *etiquet*.

It was the father of the Taverneys who was witnessing the sudden plunge of his son, returned from the campaigns of woe and exile, into the joys of the court.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FRENCH AND THE AMERICAN SKATER.

WHILE the Swiss Lake banks were covered with spectators, warming themselves by huddling together and looking from a distance by their variegated attire like a fancy carpet, the water itself resembled a glass mirror.

But it was not clear of sights. Here a sleigh was drawn by three huge mastiffs harnessed abreast like Russian sledge-horses. Their master Lauzun, lolled on tiger robes, holding his face one side, as he could not stand the full wind face first. Some less fanical sleds were pushed by servants or gentlemen, while ladies sat in them, swaddled in furs.

Suddenly a loud cheer rang as the Queen appeared at the pond edge, and it would have been entirely cleared for her if she had not motioned with the hand that none were to disturb themselves. Emboldened by the permission, skaters and sledgers formed a wide ring around her.

Count Artois, remarkable among the lightest and swiftest skaters, was the first to come up to his sister-in-law.

"Just see my brother Provence cutting away," he said, "to avoid you."

He pointed to a skater who was making off and speeding to where his coach awaited him in a snowy thicket.

"He dreads my reproaches."

"Not he. He has just learned that the glorious naval conqueror, Bailiff Suffren, is due here this evening, and he wants others to remain ignorant of such important news."

The Queen noticed some inquisitive hangers-on whom respect for the prince might not prevent listening to their speech.

"Colonel Taverney," she said, "will you kindly see that my

hand-sledge is in proper trim, and as I spy your father yonder, you may have a quarter of an hour with him."

The crowd which he cleft understood and drew back from the royal pair.

"Pray explain, brother, what my brother gains in not telling me of Commodore Suffren's coming?"

"The officer is the hero of the Indian Ocean, and deserves a magnificent reception. If he arrives without the King being notified he will be inadequately welcomed. On the other hand, Provence, knowing all about it, will greet the seaman, smile on him, and become the representative of France in congratulating the hero."

"That is clear—but how do you know this?"

"As I learn all he does—Seeing that he has spies on me, I pay people to watch him and report. A useful thing to me, and you, sister."

"Thanks for your alliance and the news. But the King?"

"Oh, his Naval Minister will tell him, having been sent him by me. Nobody will suspect that as I am so frivolous, dissipated, and too silly to busy about important matters."

"The Minister of the Navy not know that Bailiff Suffren was in port?"

"Ministers know nothing till after others are informed. But I posted mine, and he is enthusiastic. He will be ever grateful—and I want his gratitude, because I must raise a loan."

"You spoil your good deed," said the Queen laughing.

"Sister," responded the rake gravely, "you may want funds. You shall stand in with me for half."

"Thank you, but I am not in want, at present," said Marie Antoinette.

"Ask me soon though, for else I may squander all the cash."

"In that case I will discover some state secret."

"Good bye! we shall meet at the royal card-play to-night, where there will be a great rush as the minister will present Commodore Suffren."

He saluted the lady with his naturally charming courtesy, and disappeared in the press.

"Skates for Colonel Taverney," cried the Queen, waving away two tall footmen who were about to shove her sledge. "Something tells me that you can skate as well as the Knight of Saint George yonder."

"Better," said Andrea, "and he has not lost anything by living in a land with real winters, I dare say."

"Since your Majesty has trust in me, I will do my best," replied Philip, armed with the steel implements.

He placed himself behind the sledge, set it going with one hand, and a curious contest began.

Saint George was the pet of Count Provence. He was a West Indian mulatto, the chief athlete and gymnastic, superior to everybody in physical exercises. He guessed that the new-comer was a rival.

So he began to hover and circle round the Queen with such delightful bows of respect that never had any courtier executed more seductive ones on the firm floor of Versailles. Around the sled he described the most rapid but exact circles, interlacing them with other rings marvellously interwoven. Every fresh curve was traced just before the vehicle came up to his heels, and when left behind, he flew forward anew on the ellipse to gain all he had lost.

Even with the glance the movement could not be followed without being wonderstricken, dazzled and wildered.

Thereupon Philip, who had skated on the Hudson and Saint Lawrence and overcome indefatigable opponents, chose a daring course. He shot the hand-sled so swiftly forward that twice Saint George, instead of finishing his swinging round in front of the vehicle, was left behind.

As the speed of the sled caused many sight-seers to utter exclamations of fright which might alarm the Queen, Philip said:

"If your Majesty likes it not, I will stop or moderate the run."

"No, no," replied she, with the fiery ardor she put in business as in pleasure; "I have no fear. Go faster, if you can, my knight!"

"Remember you said so!"

And as his robust hand took a fresh grip of the bar at the



back, he made the sledge tremble with the vigorous impulsion. He seemed able to lift the whole with both hands.

Applying his other hand, which he had disdained to do before, he made the machine a toy in the double grasp.

From that moment, he went round Saint George in wider circles, so that the sled moved as the man did, turning its length as if it were but his skates enlarged for its runners. Spite of the size, the weight and the length, the Queen's sledge became a skate, living, flying, and waltzing like a dancer.

Saint George, finer, more graceful and more correct in his movements, began to grow uneasy. He had been skating more than an hour : seeing him perspiring and his legs trembling, Philip Taverney resolved to beat him with weariness.

Giving up the spinning round, he shot straight ahead, rapid as an arrow. With a few strokes the Mulatto rejoined him, but Philip took advantage of the moment when the second stroke multiplies the impetus of the first to hurl the sled dead ahead, letting go, as he could not keep up with it. It flew on a piece of ice where no runner had yet cut the smoothness. Saint George hurried to overtake it, but the other had gathered up his forces. He glided so artfully on the outer edge as to pass before the rival. He laid both hands on the bar, stopped it by a herculean movement and himself by digging back in his heels as he rocked backwards. Then whirling the sledge right round, he darted off in the opposite direction, leaving Saint George, unable to stop himself, sliding off where he had no prize to grasp, and completely distanced.

The air resounded with such cheers that Philip colored with bashfulness

But he was surprised to hear the Queen, after clapping her hands, turn with voluptuous exhaustion, to say, as she turned her head :

"Mercy! since we have the victory, for you will be the death of me!"

## CHAPTER X.

## THE TEMPTER.

GIDDY with the race, the Queen let her head sink upon Taverney's arm.

A shudder of stupor from the laced and gilded throng notified her that she was committing a breach of etiquette, dreadful in the eyes of jealousy and servitude.

Stunned by the excess of honor, Philip was more ashamed than if his sovereign had publicly insulted him.

A singular thrill, perhaps from the race, agitated the Queen also, for she immediately lifted her head and called Mdlle. Taverney to give her a chair.

"Excuse me, Colonel," she said to her cavalier, "it is a great misfortune to be engirt by foolish and prying persons."

Gentlemen pressed forward to assist her out, but she had changed her mind and directed another course. But she chose the footmen to push the sled, in which she lolled in reverie.

Philip alone, looked to console Saint George, but the latter had quitted the skating pond.

Still following the Queen's sledge with his gaze, he felt a sharp dig in his side. It was his father who nudged him, so as not to have to take his hand out of his muff. Dilated by the cold or by delight, his eyes flamed upon Philip.

"Say 'All goes well,' and hurry back to the Queen."

"Oh, no, thank you."

"What do you mean by that? are you mad?"

"It is impossible; you cannot think of such a thing."

"Impossible to join the Queen, who wishes for your company?"

Taverney looked steadily at the speaker and coldly said:

"I think you forget yourself. You jest in bad taste or you are mad."

"America is a far country where equality is the rule. You must be a great blockhead not to practice it here, where

American notions are the rage. But see, the Queen is looking round for the third time—looking for you, you Puritan from America?"

He gnawed his grey buckskin glove.

"She may be looking round, but it is not for me."

"Pugh," sneered the baron; "this cannot be a son of mine,—he is not a Taverney."

"Am I to thank God for that?" retorted Philip, in a low voice.

"I tell you the Queen is looking for you. Come, come, you may have reason on your side, but I have experience. Be a man and see how the cat jumps. When you went away to the American Republic, we had neither King nor Queen, save Lady Dubarry, scarcely Majesty to be respected. But on your return you see a Queen, who is to be respected."

"Certainly."

"Poor boy," and old Taverney chuckled in his muff.

"Do you blame me for respecting royalty, you, an old noble of the Taverney Redcastle strain?"

"Stop, I cry a distinction. Respect to royalty, the Crown; but a Queen is a woman and she may be touched."

"Father!" broke forth young Taverney, with scorn and rage, and a gesture so lofty that any woman—even a crowned one, seeing it, must have loved him.

"Do not believe me, but," replied the old cynic, in a low tone but a spiteful one, "ask Coigny, Lauzun, Vaudreuil."

"Silence, father," said the other in a hollow voice, "or since I cannot strike you for three such blasphemies, I will stab myself."

Taverney the Elder drew back, spun round on his heel like a beau of thirty, and said:

"It is a stupid! My horse is a donkey; my eagle a goose; I am not the lucky father of an Adonis or Apollo."

Philip detained him by the sleeve.

"Father, you have not spoken in earnest," he pleaded; "it is out of the question that a noble should spread such slanders not merely against a lady and a queen, but royalty."

"The dullard still doubts," sneered the baron.

"Is it your opinion that the Queen has paramours?"

"Ask the town and the court. Only the visitor from America is unaware of these matters."

"Vile lampoon-writers."

"Do you take me for a gazetteer?"

"No; that is the mischief of it that such as you repeat these infamies. Why repeat them?"

"Why," said the old rogue, hanging on his son's arm and grinning like a devil, "to prove that I was not wrong in saying: 'Philip, the Queen turns to look for you whom she desires. Run to her, my boy!'"

"For heaven's sake, peace—or you will madden me."

"Really, my son, will you not understand that it is no crime to love. She loves you, but you are a Quaker from America, and you will scorn her, and repulse her—like the Philip—I mean, Joseph that you are."

After these words in savage irony, seeing the effect, the old man ran away like a tempter after the first suggestion of a crime.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DELINQUENT.

CONTRARY to court habits the secret of the Bailiff Suffren's coming had been well kept. But enough leaked out that some notable event impended, for an unwonted eagerness prevailed and the least occurrence is of importance where the master of the house calls up smiles or tears at a beck or a frown.

The King, usually playing low stakes to discourage gaming, did not notice that he left all his gold on the board. The Queen hid her emotion by playing at hazard.

Philip Taverney, placed opposite his sister, looked at Coigny and Vaudreuil, asserted to be gallants of the Queen, and then at her. He questioned the pure forehead, the imperious mouth, and majestic look, and asked of all these feminine beauties the secret of the sovereign.

"Slander, all slander," he thought.

A little before eight, Marshal Castries, Master of Ceremonies, entered the hall and announced ·

“Will his Majesty be pleased to receive Commodore Suffren, arrived from Toulon?”

The name threw the assemblage into inexpressible tumult.

“Yes, and with great pleasure,” replied the King.

To explain the sympathy of France for Suffren, and the interest of King, Queen and court, it must be mentioned that he was a French mariner who had coped with the Sovereign Nation of the Seas, Great Britain in the East and taught Hyder Ali that France was then the ruling power of Christendom.

He was a man of sixty-five, short, but fiery eyes and easy, noble movements. He wore the navy coat of blue, embroidered with red waistcoat and blue breeches. His burly chin overflowed the military collar supporting his colossal head.

“The Bailiff!” exclaimed the King, beaming with joy “Be welcome at Versailles! You bring glory and all that heroes bear for their contemporaries. The future is your own. Come to my arms.”

Suffren was bending the knee but he embraced him.

“Sire,” returned Suffren, “since your Majesty is so kind to me, will I be allowed to claim a favor—one of my officers has committed an offense to discipline so outrageous that I wish your Majesty to judge the case.”

“Oh, I hope that your first request will be a boon, not a penalty.”

“Sire, in our last action, this officer was on the *Severe* —”

“Which lowered her flag,” said the King frowning.

“Just so. The British admiral was sending a prize crew aboard to man the capture when this officer, the lieutenant, who had been attending to the gun-deck battery, perceiving that firing was ceasing, ran up on deck to learn why such an order was out. He saw the flag was struck and the captain about to surrender. I ask your Majesty's forgiveness for him, but his blood boiled at the sight. He snatched up the flag within his reach, grabbed a hammer and shouting: “Resume firing, boys, ran up the rattlins and nailed the colors to the

mast. Thus it was that the Severe was kept to your Majesty."

"A grand action," said the King.

"Brave man!" added the Queen.

"Quite so; but a bad break in discipline. The lieutenant ought to obey the captain's order. Still I crave the young man's pardon, all the more as he is my nephew."

"Your nephew—you never mentioned him," said the King.

"Not to your Majesty, but to the Naval Minister, entreating him not to say a word until I had sued for his forgiveness."

"Granted," said the monarch. "I promise my protection to all rebels who thus avenge the honor of the flag and King of France. You ought to present this officer to me, Suffren."

"He is here. Come forward, Count Charny."

The Queen started as the title awakened an impression too recent in her mind to be effaced.

A young officer stepped out of the group and appeared to the royal eyes. The Queen started as though to go and meet him, but she checked herself and turned pale with a slight murmur.

Andrea also lost color and anxiously looked at the Queen.

Without seeing anything or looking at any one, Charny bowed to the King, whose hand was given to him to kiss: his face expressed no emotion but respect as he returned, modestly quivering, under the greedy gaze, among his brother officers who noisily congratulated him and patted his shoulder.

Suddenly turning to the Queen, Louis said:

"You know, we are about to build a new one-hundred gun ship. I have changed my idea of the name we had for it. Suppose we call it——"

"The Suffren," said Marie Antoinette, catching the hint.

The pent-up excitement found an issue in loud cheers of "Long live the King! the Queen forever!"

"And long live the Suffren!" added the monarch with exquisite tact; for etiquette did not allow any person to be thus prayed for, while a royal ship might have good wishes.

"Long life to the Suffren!" shouted the assemblage with enthusiasm.

The sovereign nodded his thanks for his intention being so well understood and led Suffren into his study to show him the map on which he had been marking his cruises.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### CAPTAIN CHARNY.

As soon as the King went out, the courtiers gathered round the Queen.

She who usually made everybody look down, hid her eyes behind her fan, after having exchanged glances with Andrea, to learn if she too had recognized Count Charny.

Never is a loving one wrong about the loved one.

Philip Taverney noticed the royal agitation, and saw that she had been struck by something mysterious and singular. He looked after Coigny and Vaudreuil, but they were entertaining the Count of Haga.

"My dear," said Marie Antoinette to princess Lamballe, "the face of that young man, the nephew of Commodore Suffren, is most remarkable. What did they say his name was?"

"Count Charny, I think."

"Is that it, Andrea?"

"Yes, Majesty."

"I should so like to hear the hero tell the affair with all the particulars," continued the Queen. "Bring him, if he is still in the palace."

As she was looking round she spied Taverney, and impatiently said :

"Do you mind finding him?"

Philip blushed for not having foreseen her desire ; and soon he had the presentation of the naval officer to perform.

Charny was a young man of twenty-eight : slender and tall, his shoulders were broad and his limbs perfect. Fine and soft, his countenance assumed singular energy when he expanded his blue eye, with a profound look.

Astonishing for one coming from the East Indies, he was as fair as Philip was dark.

When he approached the royal group he did not show any recognition of the Queen or her maid of honor.

This polite reserve was the kind to be specially noticed by Marie Antoinette, delicate about behavior.

It was not only from others that Charny was right to hide his surprise at discovery who was the lady in the hack. His gentlemanly conduct culminated in his pretending ignorance to the last.

His gaze, timid in good taste, did not rise when the lady addressed him.

"Count Charny," she said, "the ladies feel a natural desire, shared in by me, to hear about that ship, with full particulars. Pray tell us."

"I beg your Majesty," returned the naval officer, "to dispense with the narration of what I did as Lieutenant of the *Severe*, not from modesty but for manhood's sake, as ten brother-officers thought of the same act—only I was a little the sooner in carrying it out. My whole merit lies in that. As for making a story of it worthy your Majesty's attention, that is impossible, and your great, royal heart will appreciate this.

"The captain of the *Severe* lost his head for a space: after that he was the bravest among us; hence I beseech your Majesty not to heighten my feat as that would lower the poor officer who will ever mourn losing his grip for an instant."

"Good," said the sovereign, affected deeply and radiant with gladness, as she heard the favorable murmur hailing Charny's generous speech: "you are an honorable gentleman, *Captain Charny*, as I knew you to be."

This made the officer raise his head, with a boyish blush coloring his visage; his eyes wandered from the speaker's to Andrea in a kind of alarm; he doubted to see one so generous and rash in her generosity. He was not at the end of his tribulation.

"For," continued the intrepid lady, "it is as well to learn that this young officer, though only just off his ship, was known to us before his presentation, and deserves to be ad-



mired among ladies. He is as indulgent to them as pitiless to our enemies.

"Two ladies, lost in a vulgar crowd, ran a great danger. The count was passing at the juncture and took the two under his escort. Without knowing them or even guessing at their station, he saw them home, some—ten leagues from Paris."

"Oh, your Majesty makes too much of it," said Charny, encouraged by the tone the story took.

"Say five leagues, and drop the subject," interposed Artois.

"Have it so, brother," continued the Queen; "the fine part of it that Count Charny went his way without even learning the names of the ladies he had escorted, so that they parted from him without any uneasiness."

He was acclaimed and admired, complimented by twenty ladies all at once.

"The King is rewarding your uncle, no doubt," pursued the Queen; "I ought to do something for the nephew on my side."

While Charny, bloodless with delight, glued his lips to the proffered hand, Philip Taverny, pale with grief, hid himself in the window curtains.

Andrea was also pale, though she could not divine her brother's distress.

Artois' voice broke the silence as he said in a taunting voice:

"Dear brother Provence, greeting! man of punctuality, how can you have been waiting at the wrong gate to meet Commodore Suffren, when he was already here, received by the King?"

The eldest brother bit his lips, absently bowed to the Queen, and whispered to Favras, his guards captain,

"How did he slip past into Versailles?"

"I am puzzled to know," replied the other.

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CARDINAL ROHAN'S CAPTURE.

SCARCELY had the Queen left Countess Lamotte Valois with her golden bounty than the other laid it out mentally.

But a new turn was given to her dreams of luxury, not merely comfort, by a little note which a servant in plain dress had left. Luckily she read the blazonry and guessed it came from Cardinal Prince Louis Rohan, to whom among others she had written for assistance.

It announced his call, and she had no time to spare to make preparations more fittingly to receive a grandee of the Church. A great city has magicians under the name of secondhand furniture dealery, who execute transformations for cash in little time.

The next day Jeanne Lamotte could walk on a thick carpet, sniff perfumes from rare flowers in china vases, and admire herself in a Venice mirror by the rosy glow of pink tapers in the lustres.

At the appointed hour, Clotilde, also spruced up, announced: "The gentlemen who wrote yesterday."

With a light step but in creaking shoes, Cardinal Rohan entered the room.

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" challenged the countess, disliking this mask, and with a nod rather of a patroness.

"I am Cardinal Rohan," answered the prince, looking to see if the door had shut after the servant.

Whereupon the artful creature feigned to redden and become humble, with a courtsey fit for a king.

Seeing that he might be at his ease, the visitor put his hat on the table, and looking at the hostess, said.

"You are, really, the Countess Lamotte Valois, and your husband is a soldier?"

"Yes, my lord. And my brother is Baron Valois."

"Acknowledged as such?"

"No need; rich or poor, he is the baron."

"I should like to hear the story. You interest me, for I like the meanderings of a family line."

She told the tale as before, plainly and with scanty emotion.

"So you are a Valois?"

"As your lordship is a Rohan. We were born thus. That is all I know."

This speech was made with so much gentle majesty of misfortune resenting a slur that the man was touched and the prince not offended.

"Your highness honors me with this call. I regret that my husband is not at home to share it and he will regret the exile where poverty keeps him."

"You are living alone?" asked the cardinal.

"Quite."

"Rather daring on the part of a young and pretty lady."

"It is simple on the part of one who has no place in society."

The cardinal hitched up his chair, as if to get nearer the flaring fire.

Louis Rohan was a man at the prime, with noble and imposing countenance; he had a hand to admire, a fine and wary mouth; his front, somewhat bald, betrayed the pleasure-seeker. He was sought after by women who like love-making without noise; his generosity was quoted: with a fortune for revenue he was accounted poor.

"Speak frankly," he said: "I want to hear if I can be useful to you in any way."

"Your Eminence wishes to give me alms. I was receiving them, but I am not doing so any longer. I was so humbled that I could not resist."

"You play with words. In misfortune there is no disgrace in accepting help——"

"Even under the name I bear? would a Rohan beg?"

"I am not alluding to myself," retorted the cardinal, with emphasis mingled with haughtiness.

"My lord, I know of but two methods of begging: in rags, holding out the hand at the churchdoor, or in a gilded coach, suing at court. When I knew by your blazon on the writing paper that you were coming,——"

"But you feigned not to know me?"

"Because you did not give your name!"

"Good, this loftiness pleases me," quickly said the cardinal complacently looking at Jeanne's proud face.

"Then I said to myself," she resumed, "I will throw aside this mantle of the mendicant, covering my lowered name, and struggle on till I die with the gift I had just received."

"A gift?"

"From two ladies, one of whom dropped this box which you see."

He examined the box with which her delicate white fingers were fumbling.

"Not a family relic?"

"Not mine at all."

He opened the box, and started.

"A medallion—of Marie Theresa, Empress of Austria!"

"Do you think so?"

The cardinal was hushed; his thoughtfulness perplexed the countess and set her on her guard.

"What did the lady call herself?" he inquired, looking up attentively at the other; "pardon me the question which makes me feel ashamed as though I were a judge, trying you."

"It is a strange question: but if I knew who the lady was who left this sweetmeat-box, I should have sent it to her. But she must treasure it and will send about it shortly. All I heard was that she is the lady patroness of the Versailles Charitable Society. I accept kindnesses from ladies, as they do not humble those they assist, and this one left me a hundred gold pieces."

"Phew! but I am not astonished at the amount, for you merit all assistance and your birth makes it a law for the noble to be useful to you. But the title of a charitable society surprises me; the members are usually less liberal. What was the person like?"

"Like that portrait."

"Oh," said the cardinal, who seemed to doubt, the box in the hands reviving his suspicions.

Had the Queen really come here, without the woman knowing who she was? why then should she mask the honor of such a call? it was no longer a poor woman, but a princess of Valois succored by a queen. But was Marie Antoinette charitable to this point?

The silence was embarrassing for both, and torture for the woman.

"Did you notice the lady with your benefactress?"

"She was tall and handsome, resolute in expression, with splendid complexion and rounded figure."

"Did the other name her?"

"Only by her Christian name, Andrea."

The cardinal started, for he had no doubts now, the name of Andrea of Taverney removing all. It was known that the Queen had been in Paris with Mdlle. Taverney. Hence there was no plot here, and Jeanne Lamotte Valois was pure and fair as an angel.

"Countess, one thing particularly astonishes me, that you have not applied to the King."

"I have sent twenty petitions, but without result."

"Then, the princess of the reigning house. The Duke of Orleans, for one, is very charitable and often makes amends for the King's omissions."

"I have also solicited his Royal Highness uselessly. When not rich and the petition is not strongly backed, it is put in the ante-room stove. Lady Elizabeth, the King's sister, promised me a call, but she has never come."

"Strange!" exclaimed the cardinal. Then, as though reminded, he added abruptly, "but we are forgetting the very person to whom you ought to apply in the outset, the dispenser of favors, one who never refuses merited help—the Queen. Have you never seen her?"

"Never," replied the countess with perfect simplicity.

"Not tried to have an audience of the Queen?"

"I went to Versailles twice to be remarked by her Majesty as she came forth, but I never saw any one but Dr. Louis, who had attended my unhappy father at the Hospital, and Baron Taverney, to whom I was recommended. He said I was managing very clumsily to throw up to the King a claim on royalty, as nobody liked to be bothered by poor relations."

"That is just like the rude and selfish old rascal," said the prince. "Odd," he thought to himself. "The father shakes off the applicant and the Queen takes the daughter with her on her charitable errand. Suppose," he went on, aloud,

"I take you to Versailles and have all doors opened to you?"

"What goodness!" ejaculated Jeanne, at the top of gladness.

"It is impossible that everybody would not be interested in you in a short time," said he, a judge of womankind, who owned that he had rarely seen a more seductive creature.

"My lord, your pauses are oftentimes disquieting," said the siren; "a man like you never fails in politeness but to two sorts of women; those he loves greatly or esteems lightly. You cannot love me much and you know too little of me to value me at all. Let us leave it that you paid a polite visit to Lady Lamotte Valois."

"Nothing less, though," and he kissed her hand slowly.

"I should like it to be more another time. We ought to be friends."

The cardinal rose and opened his arms, but as the circle they were tracing was rather comprehensive for mere friendship, she eluded it.

"We three," she added, with an inimitable tone of innocence and raillery.

"What three?"

"Is there not a poor soldier wandering afar, the Count of Lamotte?"

"What an uncomfortable memory you have! do you think he would say anything if the Cardinal Prince Rohan called two or three times a-week on the Countess Lamotte Valois?"

"Three times a-week?"

"To be sure I would have to make it seven, to show it was pure friendship."

She laughed. This was the first time she so hailed his jests and he was flattered.

"Your Eminence is so well known," she objected.

"But you might call on me, not at my residence, but at a private house I have. To-morrow, at ten, you shall have the address."

She blushed as the cardinal gallantly took her hand, on which he left a caress, bold, tender and respectful all at once.

Their smiling ceremony indicated approaching intimacy.

"I have made a long step into society," thought the impoverished descendant of kings as the prelate went out.

"I have caught two birds in one trap," thought the other. 'This woman is too cunning not to catch the Queen as she has me.'

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ORIGINAL MESMERIST.

At this period the topic of Paris was Mesmerism. Dr. Frederick Anthony Mesmer, of Merseberg, was not the inventor, for we have notices of its being previously practiced by Joseph Balsamo, hero of one of our novels in this series: but he popularized the mysterious science.

All the town flocked to see him perform his wondrous cures.

The King had even given his wife permission to have a peep at the tub in which patients bathed in magnetism, so it was said.

The thaw having set in, two days after Cardinal Rohan's visit to the begging countess, the blue sky shone over that lady arrayed as became her condition, as she arrived in a hack, selected to look as much like a private carriage as possible. She stopped before Dr. Mesmer's house in Vendome Square.

It was Mid-Lent and those who had been to the Masked Ball at the Opera could look in at the doctor's before going home.

Lady Lamotte passed through the crowd, with a mask on, hearing the comment: "There is nothing the matter with her!" so stately and dashing was her bearing.

Then, what business had she at Mesmer's?

The cardinal had roused her curiosity about the owner of the bonbon-box with the portrait of an empress, but she had failed to learn who it was.

Hearing that, under the influence of animal magnetism, patients could become seers and clairvoyants, she thought she might use one of these mediums to ascertain for whom this box had been made.

The operation room was shut in from light and air except by the entrance, and the central candelabra gave but a poor lustre.

Under this was a large vat, with a lid. It was called Mesmer's Bath. Full of sulphurated water the mist saturated bottles placed at the bottom inversely. Mysterious currents circulated with healing influence on the patients. From an iron ring soldered into the cover, a long cord came which a servant wound round a patient according to the part affected. Thus all the applicants were put under its control, and also had need to touch kness or elbows to keep the current flowing through them.

It was an odd sight and had reason to excite curiosity to a great extent.

Twenty or thirty patients sat round the tub, entwined with the rope like Laocoon and his sons by the snake.

As soon as all were placed, a flow of heat was let into the room, which softened the muscles and penetrated the frame: delicate perfumes were also injected into the air: as the patients yielded to the enervation, music was heard, soft and thrilling, from a hidden band. To the notes of the harmonica were joined those of a choir, screened behind flowers.

Each patient took an iron rod fastened at one end to the tublid and pointed it to the seat of their pain or disorder.

Imagine the beatitude replacing sorrow and anguish on all the countenances, the silence broken by sighs, and you will have an exact idea of this scene.

The volunteer actors were of two classes, the really sick and credulous, and the sceptics or pretenders who wanted to figure before the public eye.

Among the believers was a handsome young woman, rather extravagantly dressed, who, touching her breast and brow with the iron rod, rolled her eyes as though all swam round her, and languished as her fine hands quivered in the grip on the rod. When her head was thrown back on the armchair, it was easy to see her pale forehead, convulsed lips and handsome throat, veined by the flow of quickened blood.

Two or three lookers-on, leaning forward, communicated a strange idea which increased their attention.



One of these was Lady Lamotte, who held her mask in her hand.

The face of the mesmerized woman struck her as though she was nailed to the spot.

‘It is the lady of charity who called on me,’ she thought, ‘the cause of Lord Rohan’s strong emotion.’

At the same time, as the patient writhed in a more powerful thrill, a man entered, without any one noticing how he had come.

Out of the tub, as if formed of the vapor condensing? he was clad in a soft lilac suit, and his pale, serene and intelligent face did not disagree with the magical manner of his appearance.

With a long wand he made a sign, and twenty robust men rushed in and carried the patients, reeling in their chairs, clear out of the room.

As they were bearing away the young convulsionist whose spasms were interesting, Lady Lamotte heard a man call out:

“Good heavens, it is she—the Queen!”

Simultaneously, two ladies walked into the ante-room, leaning on each other and followed by a footman, though he was dressed in ordinary citizen’s dress.

The aspect of these new-comers struck Lady Lamotte, who took a step towards them. But the man who had already called out, repeated in a dull and mysterious voice:

“Behold the Queen!”

Lady Lamotte started, and voices cried: “The Queen—at Dr. Mesmer’s—in a swooning fit—impossible!”

“Did you not recognize her?” demanded the man, and most seemed convinced, so strong was the likeness.

But Jeanne was looking at the new-comers. They were gazing with keen interest on the tub and its appurtenances. At the sight of the face of the elder, the countess uttered a cry. Taking aside her mask she challenged her:

“Do you not know me? You forgot this box at my house. But I am shocked at the danger your Majesty incurs. Put on my mask, and away! there is not an instant to lose.”

Mechanically the Queen donned the mask.

"Come, come," went on Jeanne, dragging the pair to the door.

The Queen did not breathe till the three were at the street door.

"I hope your Majesty has not been seen by anybody," said the countess. "I will tell you what the great danger was, when your Majesty deigns to grant me an hour's audience, for it will take some time and your Majesty may be noticed here—recognized."

The Queen's companion, who was Princess Lamballe, and not Andrea this time, supported the advice of the countess.

"Bring me that box, then, as token," said the Queen, "and ask for Laurent the janitor, who will be set on the watch. Come here, Weber," she called out in German and a carriage swiftly came up.

Lady Lamotte stood by the door till they had departed, when she muttered ·

"I have acted properly so far: but I must reflect before I take the next step."

---

## CHAPTER XV.

### PRETTY OLIVA.

DURING this time the man who had pointed out the Queen's living likeness, tapped on the shoulder of a seedy-looking spectator.

"What a capital subject for an article, for a lively newspaper writer like you. The title might run: 'Of the Danger to a Land where the King is Ruled by a Queen fond of Hysterical Fits.'"

The Gazette writer laughed but said:

"How about the Bastile?"

"Pooh! did you never hear of anagrams, vulgarly, 'back slang,' by the aid of which the royal censors are fooled? I should like to ask what censor would prohibit your telling about Prince Silou and Princess Etteniotna, Sovereign of Narfec?"

"Luminous idea!"

"Yes, and you can make light of the chapter: 'How the Princess Etteniotna fell in a flutter at the Fakir Remsen's.' It will make a hit in the drawing-rooms. Write it with vinegar in your ink, and have it ready in a week. What is your usual impression? a couple of thousand copies? oh, here is fifty louis—pull six thousand."

"Oh, who is the generous patron?"

"I will send for a thousand under my own name."

"My lord, I am your humble servant," said the pamphleteer, pocketing the windfall, and taking flight, light as a bird.

The patron of literature went to have a look at the patient with the spasms, whose disarranged skirts a woman servant was smoothing decorously.

"The resemblance is frightfully close. Heaven had a design when it was made; and she was condemned like her prototype."

As he finished this reflection, so threatening, the object slowly rose from the cushions and while she blushed a little at the attentions given her, replied with coquettish politeness to Mesmer's grave and wise questions. Stretching her pretty arms and legs like a cat after a nap, she went out, without missing one of the glances, jesting, captivating and terrified, of the beholders. But what surprised her to the degree of causing her to smile was to meet with such respectful bows in the outer room as no confirmed courtier could have found for others than his monarch.

This stupefied and reverential hedge was composed by the strange gentleman who kept hidden behind her and repeated:

"Never mind, gentlemen, she is still our Queen, and should be saluted lowly."

The object of so much respect reached the street where she was looking in vain for a hack when a strapping lackey stepped up to her and said:

"My lady is looking for her carriage?"

"No; I came in a hack."

"Shall we take you home?"

"Do so," answered the little beauty, after short perplexity from the novelty of the offer.

The footman beckoned and up drove a carriage of good appearance which received the young lady.

It went off at a rattling pace and the passenger, who liked the luxury, regretted that she did not live at a greater distance than the address she gave. It stopped in Dauphine Street, where the carriage departed after she had entered a paltry house. She went up to the second floor, where an old woman opened the door she rapped at.

"Supper ready, mother?" she asked.

"Ay, and getting cold. He has not come yet, but the gentleman whom you asked to call is here."

"Whom I asked?"

Through a glazed window she could see into the sitting room from the little hall. On the sofa was tranquilly seated the man who had heralded the Queen at Mesmer's and given fifty gold coins to the lampooner to write up the swoon.

She opened the door and walked in. He made a nod and said as he fixed a bright and kindly glance on her:

"I know what you are going to say, and it will save time if I question you myself. You are the Pretty Oliva? a very nervous but charming lady much given to the Mesmer treatment. Be good enough to sit down, for we will chat more pleasantly seated."

"You may flatter yourself on having queer manners," said Oliva.

"I saw you at the German doctor's, and I congratulate you on being all that I could wish you. I say that you are bewitching, but do not be alarmed: this is not a love declaration. Do not be frightened before you hear me. I want to go into partnership with you. Not love, you will observe, but business."

"What sort of business?" asked Oliva, her curiosity betrayed by her confusion.

"The same as you carry on every day. I am not blaming you. Tell me if you like this?"

"I do very little, next to nothing."

"Being idle? What do I care how idle you are? you like to see life? Would you refuse twenty-five louis a-month to go on seeing life?"

"I prefer fifty to twenty-five, but more than all I want to choose my own fancies."

"There you go again—I told you I do not want to be your sweetheart. To earn the fifty, we say fifty, you have only to receive me when I call, take my arm when I want it, to go about with you, and keep appointments with me."

"But I have somebody with me."

"Pack him off."

"Oh, it is not easy to pack off Captain Beausire."

"Let him stay, then."

"You are very accommodating."

"Like for like. It is a bargain—here is the first month's on account in advance."

He held out a roll of coin and as she hesitated he dropped it into her pocket without trying to test the round solidity of so enchanting a form that the finest judges of beauty would not have refrained like him.

Scarcely had the gold reached the pocket bottom than two sharp raps at the street door made Oliva jump.

"Heavens, it is he—save yourself quick," she screamed.

"Beausire?"

"He will tear you to rags—near now he thunders—he will have the door down!"

"Open it to him. You ought to let him have a latch-key."

He reclined on the sofa and said:

"I must see this rogue and reckon him up."

The knocking continued with oaths which rumbled up the stairs.

"Go and open, mother," said Oliva, furious. "You have brought this on yourself, sir."

"Never mind," answered the other, staying calm and motionless on the sofa though a maddened man bounded into the room with hoarse imprecations.

"Oho, it was because a man was here that I was kept at the door?" he roared.

He took the stranger's attitude as indecision or fright. He gritted his teeth in his face, saying:

"I expect an explanation, sir!"

"What do you want explained, Master Beausire? that I am a very quiet fellow at whom you are staring when I am chatting honorably with the lady."

"Most honorably," said Oliva.

"Hold your tongue," said Beausire.

"Don't be rough to the lady," interposed the stranger, "she is quite innocent, and if you are out of temper——"

"He has lost at gaming," prompted Oliva.

"I have been cleaned out, death of all the devils," yelled the bully.

"When you would have liked to clean others, eh?" and the stranger laughed.

"None of your unseemly jests; and do me the pleasure to take yourself off. Up with you or I will smash the sofa and all there is on it."

"You did not tell me, dear Oliva, that this Beausire has crazy spells! What ferocity he shows!"

The exasperated Hector drew his sword theatrically and with a flourish that traced a circle at least ten feet in circumference.

"Rise or I will pin you to the sofa!" he said.

"I never saw a more unpleasant fellow," said the other, softly drawing his court sword from behind him.

Oliva screamed piercingly.

"Be quiet, pretty one," said the stranger, "or else one of two events will come to pass: you will bewilder Beausire and he will get hurt, or the watchmen will come in and lug you away to St. Lazare Prison for Unrepentant Magdalens."

Oliva replaced her uproar with most expressive dumbshow, as the speaker with his little skewer not only disarmed Beausire of his long rapier but sent it—bang! through the window.

"Have a care," said the victor, "for if your sword falls on some passer, point down, he will be a dead man."

Recalled to his senses, the braggart ran to the door and down stairs to regain his blade and keep from entanglement with the guardians of the peace.

The woman seized the vanquisher's hand and cried:

"You are brave. But for the love of heaven, get out of this. Go upstairs till you hear the door locked as he is searching here for you. I will trap him and put the key in my pocket. I will give him a beating to gain time for your escape."

"You are delightful company. Good-bye till I see you again this evening."

"This evening?"

"Yes, there is a masquerade ball at the Opera-house, and here is ten louis for your dresses."

"Dresses?"

"Take him along." And the stranger laughed.

"Thank you—good bye!"

"But if he beats you?"

"I will drop you a note—you can have a servant looking up at the sky?"

"Good!"

From his overhead retreat the stranger heard the wrangle and clapper-clawings of the couple, shouts and reproaches succeeding the blows and claps.

"Right," he reasoned, "they went at it too hot not to cool off pretty soon."

He went down stairs and posted one of his two footmen where a carriage was waiting, to watch for the woman's note.

---

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SHOWER OF GOLD.

IN the first place Beausire was surprised at being locked in. He was frightened lest it was with the man who had braved him. But as he had fled, he concluded he was the frightened one, and he wanted to be after him. But Oliva held the key and the voice had no more effect on her than the hand. Besides, she reinforced her hands with a formidable pair of tongs, whose aspect made him hold aloof.

"You are my ruin," he said.

"You are mine. You have squandered all my money in drink and on the cards."

"You did all that was bad, and now top the climax by having callers."

"Pretty callers you have—wretches who gambled away their wives' money."

"I play for a living."

"And with much success—we are starving to death on your trade."

"Yours is a fine one, when you blubber because your old dress gets torn and you cannot afford a new one."

"It is better than yours," screamed Oliva, dashing a handful of gold coins right into his flushed face.

The coin rolled about among the furniture and over to the wall, with clinking falls, and showed their yellow faces. When the gambler heard this metallic shower tinkling, he reeled as in vertigo rather than with remorse.

"Bless us, she is rich," he exclaimed, as a second dose smote him in the face.

And down on his knees he dropped to collect the pieces.

"You miserable, shameful coward," she said.

He rose, whether he had gathered all or because the reproach stung him into blushing.

"Ha ha," he said, with so serious a tone that nothing could be funnier, "you save up money by depriving me of the necessities of life? you let me go round in seedy duds, with patched hose and a rusty hat, while you are storing gold in your casket? these coins have come from selling my good clothes, of course?"

"You rascal," said Oliva, with a scornful look which did not make him wince.

"I would not overlook avarice but this is only economy," he remarked.

"And you wanted to kill me?"

"I was wrong, for I see that you are a good provider."

"Return me my money, or I shall run you through the body with your own sword."

"I will never give you leave. What do you want for the money?"

"Double."

"I will bring it back quadrupled."

She caught him by a skirt and ripped it off.

"You have torn my coat, now, but I shall get a new one,"

She tore off the second flap.



"Ah, but no matter! the gambling hell frequenters are not dainty about appearance."

"You can put on your winter coat, for I want you to run an errand."

She showed that she still had some forty pieces of gold, as she tossed them in her hands.

"Order me," he said, bowing.

"Go and get a complete dress for the Masked Ball, black for you, and another for me in white satin. I give you twenty minutes."

"But how much money to buy the costumes?"

"You have twenty-five louis."

"Yes, but——"

"I will replace them; but if I gave you more you would not come home."

"She is a witch—I had the intention of bolting!" said the scoundrel.

While he was going on his quest, Oliva scribbled a note and threw it out of the window wrapped around a fragment of a vessel they had smashed in the scuffle. The lackey pounced on it, and vanished.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE OPERA BALL.

THE Opera was the temple of pleasure for the Parisians.

The dancing was at its hight when two domino-wearers, unable to stem the tide of promenaders and dancers, took refuge beneath the Queen's box. The wall gave them some support.

The man was tall and in black; the woman slight and in white; he twitched his arms and she turned her head every way.

"I tell you, Oliva," said the man in black, "that you are expecting somebody as you are twisting your neck like a weather-cock. You are here to turn the head of the men, not your own, my lass."

"You have brought me here and you must abide the consequences. Do not roughen your voice to me, and stop using my name. It is in bad taste to mention names at the public balls."

Black's gesture of anger was interrupted by the arrival of a blue cloak, tall, stout and handsome in bearing.

"Come, come, captain," interrupted this one, "let the lady sport in her own way. Every day is not a holiday and one does not go to all the Opera balls."

"Mind your own business," returned the black domino roughly.

"A little politeness never hurts anyone," was the reply.

"Why should I be under constraint towards one I do not know?"

"But I know you, *Corporal* Beausire."

The bully started to hear his proper title, and his shaking was imparted to the lady on his arm.

"Do not be scared—I am not one of the police of Chief Crosne, as you imagine. And it is no use feeling for your sword, which you wisely left at home. Let us change the conversation, and partners. I will take the lady please. Such anti-monopoly is the rule at the Opera Balls, I believe."

"If the lady is agreeable."

"Do not be so obstinate when you were so pliable a while ago, in Dauphine Street."

Oliva roared with laughter.

"Be quiet," said the bully. "I do not understand what you are talking about, sir. Speak out like a man."

"I am the gentleman who would have struck in had you persevered in your intention to kill this lady before the chink of the gold pieces stopped you."

"Hush sir!"

"Call it hush-money, then! now, resign the lady to me. All the more as it is for your benefit that we are going to talk."

"For my benefit? It is not enough to assert a thing, it must be proved."

"I will prove," replied Blue Domino, "that your presence is as hurtful to you as it would be useful in another place. You are member of a gambling gang who run a hell in Potauffer

Street. Well, the chief members are going to divide the bank this night, and unless you are there, you will get nothing of your share.

"Ah, you want to send me there to have me arrested by the police who are going to 'pull' it?"

"How foolish you still are. If I wanted you out of the way, I should have had arrested before this, and the lady and I would not be hampered by you. But my motto is 'Win by gentleness and Persuasion,' Master Beausire."

"Oh, it was you who was sitting on the sofa at Oliva's!" exclaimed Beausire. "Still, I think your intentions are good, and certainly your advice about those treacherous blackguards is so. Take the lady's arm, and blush if you do not bear yourself properly."

Blue Domino laughed, and tapping the other man on the shoulder, said:

"Be easy. I make you a present of a hundred thousand livres in sending you to catch those knaves for they would not have left you a penny."

"Right. A pleasant evening!" muttered Beausire, saluting, and with a wheeling about, he disappeared.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE QUEEN AGAIN!

THE man in blue took possession of the prize.

"Now, let us deal," said she. "I let you have your fun with poor Beausire, but I warn you that I am less easy to handle. So talk to me prettily, or——"

"I do not know anything prettier to talk about than your own story, dear Nicole," said the gentleman, pleasantly squeezing her arm, which made her stifle the scream the name had wrung from her.

But she recovered quickly like one used to being surprised.

"What name did you speak?" she demanded. "Nicole? I think. Do you mean by any chance to apply that to me? In

that case you have wrecked yourself in sailing out of port, for I am not named Nicole."

"Now, you are not; you are Oliva. Nicole Legay is too countrified, though it was the beloved name when you had a heart to be loved."

"Loved, by whom?"

"By Gilbert."

At this the woman felt a thrill in every vein, and the man had the quivering transmitted to him.

"Good heavens, how do you know?" she stopped suddenly and tried to pierce his mask with unspeakable emotion. "Did you know Gilbert?"

"Yes; a charming blade, whom you loved?"

"He was handsome, no, not so, but I thought it—he was full of knowledge and my equal by birth. No, I am wrong again. So long as Gilbert desired, no woman was his equal?"

"Not even Andrea of Tav——"

"I see what you are driving at," interrupted Oliva Nicole; "yes, he loved above me. What has become of him?"

"I thought you could tell me, better than anybody. Because he came to Paris from Taverney after you."

"That is ten years ago, and so much happens in that space."

"The bent of this conversation saddens you?"

"No: it does me good to go back to my youth. Some lives are like rivers—the muddiest has a pure source. Continue without heeding one poor sigh drawn from my bosom."

"My poor girl," returned the man in blue, with a tremor betraying concealed merriment beneath the mask: "I know all about you, Gilbert and the other person whom I need not name."

"Then, tell me why Gilbert fled from Trianon where he was a royal gardner, and I will be convinced. But, oh! I guess! you are Gilbert."

"I reply you are mad. He is no more."

"Dead?" said Nicole Legay, with doubt. "Take off your mask."

"I will, if you will remove yours."

"Yes, or you may snatch it off."

The stranger stepped into the dark corner and lifted his viz-

ard. The woman gazed but stamped her foot, saying :  
"Alas ! it is not Gilbert."

"Had it been," replied the other, donning the crape again,  
"and he had bidden you remember Taverney Redcastle——"

"There would be no Beausire to me. Perhaps it is better he  
is dead."

"Yes, for he would not love you, fair though you be."

"Do you mean he would scorn?"

"No, he would fear you. So, better dead, for he might cloud  
the bright future before you. Enough about him, let us speak  
of yourself. Why did you run away from the service of Mdlle.  
Taverney with Colonel Beausire?"

"Because I wanted to leave Trianon and had to find some  
companion. I could not stay near Gilbert, a jilted thing."

"Did you gain so much by flight? listen, though I tell you  
your own story. You fled with Beausire, to dwell in Portugal  
for a couple of years, when you sailed away to the Indies with  
a ship captain and without Beausire. At Chandernagor, you  
captivated a nabob from whom you ran away with jewels. Un-  
fortunately, at the first European port where you landed, you  
met Beausire who seized you and the gems, sold them and—  
as love is the nicest thing going, and you love him—you ought  
to be the happiest woman in creation."

Nicole hung her head and, putting up her hand, pearls trickled  
through the fingers—more precious than any on her brace-  
lets but not what Beausire could sell.

"And you have acquired this precious woman for fifty louis,"  
she said.

"I know it was too cheap," returned the man with the court-  
esy which the well-bred use even to the lowest.

"I wonder I am not dear at any price."

"You are worth much more ; as I shall prove. But you do  
not understand me. At this time, I need all my attention, and  
yours. Give me your arm and let us stroll."

They walked through the groups, she giving her elegant  
head the toss and swing which good judges of action covetously  
regarded : for at Opera Balls, the beautiful woman sauntering is  
studied as at the race track connoisseurs watch the racer's gait.

"Speak if you like," said the stranger ; "but do not expect

me to answer. Disguise your voice, keep your head erect, and scratch your neck with your fan."

She obeyed.

They were passing a knot composed of perfumed ladies and fops in the centre of which a stylish man of free carriage, spoke to those who listened respectfully.

"Who is that man?" asked Oliva, "in the pretty pearl-grey?"

"Count Artois," replied the stranger; "but say no more, for mercy's sake."

While Oliva was stupefied at being near a prince of the royal house, two other maskers took refuge where there were no seats and it was an islet in the turbulent sea.

"Lean against this column, countess," said a voice which made an impression on the Blue Domino.

"It is Rohan," he said to himself. "Good. My good little pet," he said aloud to Oliva, "we are going to have some fun."

"Glad to hear it, for you have twice made me sad—when you sent away Beausire, who sometimes makes me laugh, and mentioned Gilbert whose memory always sets me crying."

"I will take the place of both," he said gravely. "I do not ask love but your gratifying my whims as I shall fulfill yours. The gentleman in black whom you see yonder is a German friend of mine, who refused to come to the ball as he had a headache."

"You also said you were not going."

"Just so."

"He has a lady with him."

"I don't know her. We will go up. You must pretend you are a German, that is, do not speak."

"And deceive him?"

"I warrant we shall. Begin by pointing him out to me with your fan."

Oliva obeyed with docility and sharpness delighting her companion to whom she pretended to whisper.

The Black Domino had his back to the hall, but the lady with whom he was chatting, perceived Oliva's action.

"My lord, there is a couple over there quizzing us," she said.

"Fear nothing, countess; it is impossible any one should know us. Since we are alone in the crowd, let me tell you all that is said under——"

"The mask?"

"Under the rose, too."

"Do not; you will destroy yourself—and the greater danger is that our spies will hear you. Those two; they are coming up."

Oliva and her escort approached, and the latter addressed the cardinal:

"Mask, this lady with me wishes to put a question or two, to you."

"Let it be quickly, then," said Rohan, altering his voice.

"And be plainly spoken," added Countess Lamotte, who was the priestly prince's lady.

"So plain-spoken, that you, curious that you are, shall not hear them." In irreproachable German, he asked the cardinal this question:

"Is your highness in love with the lady with you?"

"You are wrong to call me highness, not being the person you think," said the other.

"Not at all, for though I did not recognize you, the lady can not be mistaken. Do not you speak, I conjure you," he added to Oliva who simply nodded. But pretending to take her speech, he went on: "My lord cardinal, the lady says 'He whose memory is not ever on the alert, whose imagination does not perpetually replace the presence of the beloved one, he loves not, and would be wrong in saying he does.'"

"Impossible," exclaimed the cardinal, while Lady Lamotte left his arm in spite without his noticing the loss. "Lady," he continued to Oliva who stood up straight in her satin rump, "are not the lines which your cavalier speaks for you those I read in a house of yours?"

Her arm being squeezed, Oliva nodded.

"The palace of Schoenbrunn, and they were written with a gold pen by an august hand?"

Again Oliva nodded.

The cardinal staggered and groped for support. His hand rested on the Blue Domino's shoulder.

"Thus it ended," proceeded the latter: "'But he who beholds the beloved one everywhere, and guesses she sent the flower, the favorite perfume, even through impenetrable veils, he may hold his peace, for his voice is in her heart. That heart, hearing him, will make him happy'"

"Halloa, they are jabbering German here!" suddenly broke in a fresh young voice from a number of maskers joining the group of the cardinal. "Do you understand it, marshal? or you, Charny?"

"Yes, your highness."

"The Count of Artois!" exclaimed Oliva, nestling up to the Blue Domino, for the four men had jostled her.

At this the orchestra blared and boomed, and the dust of the floor with the powder off hair and wigs flew in rainbow spirals towards the chandeliers.

"Have a care," said the Blue Domino authoritatively.

"Sir, we are pushed by the crowd," said the prince. "Excuse us, ladies."

"Let us get out of this," said Lady Lamotte in a low voice to the cardinal.

Instantly Oliva's hood was crumpled up and twitched off by an unseen hand; her untied mask fell off, too. For a second her features appeared in the penumbra of the shelf formed by the projecting first tier of boxes. The Blue Domino uttered an outcry of affected dismay, and Oliva one of alarm. Three or four exclamations of surprise greeted the discovery.

The cardinal nearly dropped, and would have fallen on his knees, in adoration, but Lady Lamotte upheld him.

A flood of masqueraders separated Artois from the cardinal and his lady.

Rapid as lightning Blue Domino lifted Oliva's hood and restored her mask; approaching the cardinal he caught him by the hand.

"My lord," he said, "an irreparable mischance places the honor of this lady in your power. Let us be off," he added to Oliva, while the prince-prelate wiped his streaming brow.

"I know what the cardinal believes impossible," thought Lady Lamotte: "he has taken this woman for the Queen, and thus is he upset by the mere resemblance. It is a fresh observation for me."



They tediously made their way through the crowd. It had been their intention to go to the private house which the munificent churchman had presented to his new conquest, but the encounter with the Queen's *doppel-ganger* had spoilt his liveliness. He went to his own residence and she had the new luxury to herself.

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ON HIS OWN GROUND.

THE mansion of Count Cagliostro, standing in St. Gilles Street, was a building like those erected under Louis XIV., of great simplicity and majesty of lines compared with the *conceits* in brick and marble run up in the reign of his foregoers in the Renaissance style.

As a hackney carriage drove up, the only signs of life were the coachman dozing on the box of a large coach, wrapped in a fox-skin overcoat, and two valets, one armed with a hunting knife, who silently strode the courtyard steps.

A gentleman leaped out of the hack when it was admitted into the large yard and asked speech of the Count of Cagliostro.

"My lord is going out," replied a servant.

"The more reason why I should hasten, for I must speak with him at once. Announce the Knight of Redcastle, Philip of Taverney."

He followed the footman with so hurried a step that he reached the reception room at the same time.

"Taverney?" reiterated a voice, manly yet gentle; "admit him."

Philip entered under the influence of that calm voice.

He saluted a man of large build, with vigor and lustiness most uncommon, no other than the character whom we have seen successively appear at Richelieu's dinner table, Mesmer's medical bath rooms, Oliva's apartments and the Opera Ball.

"Excuse me delaying your going out, my lord," said the officer returned from America.

"No need, for I expected you. You would have been here

a couple of hours ago but for an unexpected interruption."

Philip clenched his fists, for this man exercised a wondrous spell over him. But without noticing the fretful quivering of his caller, he said :

"Pray be seated."

He pushed an armchair forward.

"That was placed for you."

"Enough of such foolery, my lord. I have not come to test your "skill at fortune-telling if you are a diviner. So much the better for you, as you will know what I want to speak about and you will be on your guard."

"On my guard from what?" queried the count, with an odd smile.

"Guess, if you are a good guesser."

"As you like it. I will spare you the pains of stating the cause of your visit—you want to pick a quarrel, and about the Queen. Now, it is your turn, and I will listen."

These words were no longer spoken with the host's courteous accent but the dry, cold one of an antagonist.

"You are right, my lord, and I like this way of putting it. There is a certain pamphlet assailing the Queen—the author of which I have dealt with. You know this pamphlet?"

"I have bought a thousand copies."

"But they will not come under your hand, for I waylaid the porter who was to deliver them and bribed him to carry them to my lodgings where my servant is notified to receive them."

"You should have done the business yourself, for men who take bribes may do so on both sides and the porter was paid over your head again by my servant to still bring them to the destination of the buyer. As you doubt you may look into this cupboard and see for yourself."

He tranquilly opened a safe in the wall and showed a ream of printed paper still reeking from the press. Philip turned towards him but the host did not move though the movement was most threatening.

"My lord, you appear to be a man of courage," said Philip, "hence I demand satisfaction of you, sword in hand, for the insult to the Queen of which you become an accomplice by holding even one copy of this libel."

"You are in error which pains me," returned Cagliostro, without changing his position as he leaned against the mantelshelf. "I am fond of novelties, flying posts, pamphlets and catchpennies. I make a collection of such things, in order to have mementoes of a thousand matters which I might otherwise have slip my mind. I bought these sheets—how am I insulting any one by such purchase?"

"A honorable man does not buy such infamous trash."

"You will excuse me but I am not of your opinion on the nature of this print—a pamphlet, but not an insult."

"At least you will own it is a lie?"

"You are wrong again, sir, for the Queen was at Mesmer's bathroom."

"False!"

"Do you imply that I lie?"

"I imply nothing. I say you lie."

"Since you put it so, I reply that I saw her there, as plainly as I see you."

Philip wished to look his defier in the face but he could not contend with the frank, noble and splendid gaze and, fatigued, he averted his glance, saying :

"I persist in saying that you lie. I am astonished that you have not raised your hand to strike me, with it or a sword. I will not treat you worse than one noble should another. I demand your burning all those filthy things."

"I refuse."

"Then you expose yourself to being treated like the wretch who wrote them."

"Cane me?" said Cagliostro, laughing, and no more shrinking than a statue. "I am stronger than you and if you come at me with a stick I shall take you by the neck and crop and sling you a dozen feet off, and as many times as you renew the assault."

"The trick of the British sporting gentleman—our market-porter's. But I will have a try at it."

Drunk with ire, Philip Taverney dashed at Cagliostro, who thrust out his arms like iron grappels, caught him by the throat and waist and flung him upon a pile of cushions which deadened the fall,

After this display of prodigious strength, he returned to the lounge against the fireguard.

Taverney rose, pale and frothing at the mouth, but the reaction of cold reason suddenly restored his mental faculties.

"You are indeed as strong as any four men," he said while adjusting his ruffles and cuffs, "but your logic is weaker than your wrists. In treating me thus you have made me your eternal foe, who, vanquished and humiliated, has the right to demand your drawing the sword on me. Draw, or you are a dead man!"

"Have you not had enough of me?" replied the count: "or must I run the risk of being wounded by you, like poor Gilbert?"

"Gilbert—what name is that?" faltered Taverney.

"Luckily, you have only a sword this time, instead of a gun. Ah, you thought there were no witnesses when you shot him down in the cave of the Azores Islands."

"Defend yourself," yelled Taverney.

"So easily, with the sword, or thus!"

And, as the infuriated young man darted his sword at him, he flung the contents of a small phial at him when the point was only three inches away. Scarcely had the liquid touched the knight and he was forced to imbibe it than the fumes of the ether overcame him, and dropping his weapon, he went down on his knees. Cagliostro prevented him measuring his length, lifted him into a chair and sheathed his sword for him, saying:

"Cease to be a boy and commit follies, and listen to me."

"You have overpowered me," sighed Taverney; "I cannot make a move. You take away my volition and ask me to listen."

The magician took up another phial and bade him smell it. It dispelled the vapor of the anesthetic and it seemed to him as though the sunshine had burst into every corner of his brain.

"Has your memory come back? then you will acknowledge that I was right in what I did?"

"No, for I act in virtue of a sacred principle."

"In defending a monarchy, you who have fought for the in-

dependence of the Thirteen States? No, be frank and say that you are defending the monarch's wife."

"Innocent and worthy of respect, it is a divine law to defend the weak."

"This, a weak woman, to whom thirty millions bow the knee and head?"

"She is calumniated."

"I have the right to believe otherwise."

"You act like an evil genius."

"Who tells you so?" thundered Cagliostro. "Whence comes your boldness in deciding which is right of us two? You defend royalty, and I defend mankind. Warrior for the American Republic, knight of the order of Cincinnatus, I recall you to the love of the people and equality. You march over the masses to kiss a queen's hands: I would trample on queens to raise the people one step. Fight for your dream in the light of the court while I plan in the dark solitude. When I come forth, neither you nor your party, whatever their efforts, will delay me one single instant."

"You frighten me," said Taverney. "Thanks to you, I am perhaps the first to catch a glimpse of the abyss towards which the crown is rolling."

"Be prudent then, you who have seen the gulf."

"You are not kind though," went on Taverney, feeling the paternal tone the arch-revolutionist had used, "for you must know that I shall leap into the gulf rather than see my loved ones perish in it."

"But I have forewarned you and I wash my hands of what ensues."

"Well, I will use a woman's arguments to defend a woman. I ask you with clasped hands and tearful voice to destroy the libel which may ruin a woman. Grant this, or on mine honor I will pierce my heart with the sword which was powerless against you."

"Oh," said the conspirator, bending sadly eloquent eyes upon the supplicant, "that all were like you! I should be with them and they should not perish."

A short silence followed.

"Count them and see that you burn them all," said he.

With his heart rising into his mouth, Philip pulled the papers from the closet, tossed them into the fire, and said as he wrung the Count's hand with effusion :

"Farewell! a hundred times thanks for what you have done."

"I owed him this much compensation for what his sister endured through the mistake in not calling her out of the mesmeric sleep, when she fell the victim to Gilbert; that time when I walked the earth as Joseph Balsamo."

---

## CHAPTER XX.

### SCANDALS TAKE WINGS.

WHILE these events were occurring at Paris, the King was figuring out on the map, tranquilly in his study, the course for Lapeyrouse.

He was interrupted by the entrance of his brother, Count Provence, a short, ruddy, fat man with a bright eye. He rushed in too disrespectfully for a brother and too familiarly for a subject.

"I wager that you did not expect me," he said, "but I have some news for you—such a piece of gossip—so droll and grotesque, but amusing for its oddity.

"Some slur at me?"

"I should not laugh at that, God forbid!"

"Then it is a fling at the Queen."

"You are a conjurer," and the malignant prince held out a copy of "Story of Etteniotna," which had escaped the sword of Philip Taverney and Charny's cane.

"Infamous," cried the sovereign when he had run it over with an experienced eye.—

"It is asserted that my sister went to Mesmer's Baths."

"So she did, and I authorized her:—"

"But not to be mesmerized and indulge in the carp-like capers of the magnetized patients—"

At this moment the King had reached the paragraphs where the Queen was supposed to have had a hysterical spasm.

"Impossible!" he said. "The police will have to attend to this."

"It is Chief Crosne's report-day and he is waiting."

"Stay while I have him called. This is a family matter: if she be innocent, you who have suspected her ought to know it first."

Magistrate Crosne made his bows to the two princes: then he said to the elder that his report was ready.

"First of all, explain how there has been published in Paris a pamphlet so shameful as this against the Queen?"

"Oh, 'Etteniotna?' it is by a writer named Reteau, for whom I have the warrant of arrest ready for the royal signature in my portfolio. But I wanted to see whether it might not be better to give the scribbler some money and send him to be put in the pillory somewhere else. When we punish a lying lampoonist, the people like to see him flogged, but when he tells the truth——"

"Yes, I know that the Queen went to Mesmer's, for I sanctioned it: but that could not hurt her?"

"Humph," said Crosne, sadly: "it compromises."

"What did your men say about it?"

"That her Majesty went in plain dress and all alone——"

"Not alone—you mistake. Your reports are faulty."

"Not when they have down even to her screams--her sobs and sighs were even set down," went on Chief Crosne, timidly.

"The Queen forgot herself to this degree? she holds her fame and honor so lowly?"

"Impossible," said Provence; "this would be worse than a scandal and the Queen is incapable of it."

This was rather an addition to the accusation than a refutation and the King took it so.

"I never risk the honor of the house, and the Queen's is as my own. I did allow her to go to the doctor's, but I enjoined her to be accompanied by a sure, saintly, irreproachable person."

"Well, if somebody reliable like Princess Lamballe for example——"

"Precisely, brother, it was the princess whom I suggested."

It was easy to verify this as the Princess Lamballe was strolling with another lady under the windows.

She entered, calm and lovely, a beautiful face on a flawless body, charming and imposing.

"What was your Majesty's wish?" she inquired in an angelic voice, from which might come the Queen's doom.

"A piece of information. What day did you go to town with the Queen?"

"Wednesday, Sire."

"What did you go there for, cousin?"

"To see Dr. Mesmer's, with her Majesty. She said you authorized it, at any rate."

"Quite right. I seem to breathe again, for Princess Lamballe never utters untruth."

"Never, Sire," sweetly said the lady.

"Never," said Crosne, in full belief: "hence if I were allowed——"

"Yes, you are allowed to question. Do not be alarmed, princess: for torture is abolished in France, except for the sovereign," said Louis with a smile.

"May I learn from your highness how the Queen was dressed?"

Marie Antoinette had been attired widely different from Oliva, which made Crosne stare with surprise, Provence bite his lips and the King rub his hands.

"What did the Queen do on entering?"

"You may well say on entering, for we were hardly inside the experiment hall, where all were so absorbed in the sights as not to notice us, than a lady rushed up and offering the Queen her mask, begged us to be off as soon as we could. So we departed."

"Extraordinary, supernatural," declared the King's brother, affecting a gaiety he did not feel.

"Nothing supernatural about it," said Crosne, feeling remorse on seeing the King's delight: "my men have blundered. As for the pamphleteer, I will have him locked up."

"And," said the King, "this lady who bundled you two so unceremoniously out of the arcana before you had more than a peep at the mysteries, I must speak with her, for she is the key to the mystery."

"That is my opinion," said Crosne, turning back.

"It was the Countess Lamotte Valois."



"That intriguante?" exclaimed the King, with disappointment.

"That genteel beggar," said Provence; "she will be a hard nut to crack: she is full of cunning."

"We can be as cunning," said Crosne.

"No," said the King, sadly, "I am sorry to see the Queen environned by such people. I would rather deprive myself of the joy of having the Queen wholly justified than have to face that viper."

"But you shall see her," interrupted the Queen, pale with anger, as by opening the door she exhibited herself splendid with indignation and nobility, to the dazzled sight of Count Provence, who bowed awkwardly from behind the flap of the door almost shutting him in. "Yes, Sire; it is not a question whether you like or dread to see the person: she is a witness from whom a burst of truth will be wrung by my intelligent accuser—"she looked at Provence: "the frankness of my judges"—she gave the King and Crosne another glance: "and my own conscience, however oddly constituted. I, the accused, demand the hearing of this woman, and she shall be heard."

"You must understand," said the King, "that Lady Lamotte will not be sent for to have the honor of deposing for or against your Majesty. I am not weighing your honor against that woman's veracity."

"No necessity of sending for her, as the lady is here."

"Here," repeated Louis, jumping as though he had stepped on a rattlesnake.

"Sire, you know I called on her to help her, and I left a little box which she has brought me. But why this repugnance to her? Come, let your Chief of Police who knows everything, say——"

"I know nothing unfavorable to the lady," replied Crosne. "She is impoverished: and a little ambitious, that is all."

"Ambition in her is the cry of nature. If that is all, the King may admit her as witness."

"I do not know," faltered the sovereign; but I have forewarning against her that she will be disagreeable; cause of some misfortune in my life."

"Superstition? fie!"

Five minutes subsequently Jeanne Lamotte came, modest and bashful, but distinguished in bearing, into the King's closet. The three men did not make her tremble. What a part to play! she saw that the Queen was in need of her, and that Marie Antoinette was suspected of falsehood from which she could clear her.

"Sire," said she, "I went to Dr. Mesmer's as all Paris is running, out of curiosity. The sight seemed rather coarse to me. I was on the point of going when I saw two ladies approach in whom I recognized her Majesty and this lady, whom I now know to be the Princess Lamballe. It seemed to me that her Majesty would be out of place where real and pretended afflictions were on show, and—asking pardon for judging her conduct—I did what I was impelled to do, without, I trust, overstepping the respect due her Majesty's lightest movements."

The Queen thanked her by a look which she was warily thirsting for.

"Sire, you hear that?"

The King had not relaxed in his antipathy.

"The lady's testimony was not required by me," he said roughly. "Enough! When the Queen has my approval, she need look no farther: and she had mine."

He rose on these words which crushed Provence, for whom the Queen added a disdainful smile. The King went on to thank Lamballe for having let herself be troubled for "a trifle;" while as Lady Lamotte had to pass him he could not be so impolite as not to nod in return for a low courtesy.

When the three ladies were heard in the passage, chattering as they went, Louis said:

"Brother, do not let me keep you, as I have business to go over with my Chief of Police. I thank you for having given your attention to this full justification of your sister. It is easy to see you are as glad as myself, which is not saying little."

Provence bowed, still smiling, but he did not sneak out of the room until he believed the ladies were out of sight.

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

## OUT OF THE PAN INTO THE FIRE.

ON leaving the royal study, the Queen sounded the depth of the danger she had run. This made her value the reserve and delicacy Jeanne had shown in speaking her deposition and the truly remarkable tact by which she had kept herself in the background.

Consequently, instead of accepting her offer to pay her respects and go, the Queen retained her by saying with an amiable smile :

"It was very fortunate that you stopped us on the threshold of Mesmer's operation room, although it was used as a text for describing me as in the 'Saloon for Hysterics,' as they call it."

"But how is it that Crosne's spies, presumably keen men, affirm that your Majesty was in the inner room?"

"That is odd," said Marie Antoinette, reflecting.

Jeanne knew the fatal secret of which a word might destroy her malignant influence over the royal destiny.

"There was a woman there, throwing herself about as in a fit," she said, "But to me——"

"She rather resembled some hired Goddess of Hygeia than the Queen of France, you would say?"

"Certainly."

"Countess, you handsomely spoke to the King: now, it is my place to speak handsomely to you." Then looking at Andrea Taverney who had no sooner entered than Lady Lamotte recognized the second lady of the "Versailles Charity Organization," she went on: "How are your affairs progressing? what steps are you taking to manifest your rights?"

Jeanne was looking at Andrea, to see if she were not jealous; but all she saw was perfect indifference. With the same passions as her royal mistress, Andrea, superior to others in kindness, wit and generosity, had she been happy, shut her-

self up in that impenetrable screen which all took to be the proud modesty of virginal Diana.

"Have you heard what they have been telling the King about me?" asked the Queen.

"As they could not say enough good they have said all the evil," was Andrea's reply.

"A capital phrase," said Lady Lamotte simply. "It expresses fully the sentiment of all my life which I could never put into words."

"I must tell you, Andrea, that——"

"Oh, I know: Count Provence related it to a friend who repeated it to me."

"What a pretty thing to propagate the slander after rendering homage to virtue!" exclaimed the Queen. "But let that pass. I was speaking with the countess on her position. Is anybody helping you now?"

"Your Majesty," replied Jeanne, boldly, "as you allow me to kiss your hand."

"But it is empty. She has gratitude," observed the Queen to Andrea, "and I like its outbursts."

Andrea made no remark.

"Am I your only protectress?"

"Lady Boulainvilliers was so till she died; her husband became my persecutor. At present, I have but one friend, a true gentleman, a prince—Cardinal Rohan, please your Majesty."

"My enemy," said the Queen, retreating towards Andrea, but smiling.

"The cardinal an enemy to your Majesty!" protested Jeanne, who saw her opening.

Reflecting that from collision light results, she set to defending Rohan with all the wit and curiosity with which good mother Nature had endowed her liberally.

The Queen listened, only out of faintness and kindness; but Jeanne imagined that, after all, she had some feeling of affection for the cardinal who had fallen in love with her when he went as ambassador to her mother's court. At court the rule is never to speak well of one whom the master thinks ill. Jeanne's novel infraction contended the hearer and almost

delighted her, for she thought she saw a heart, where was placed a dry sponge.

The conversation continued on the footing of this benevolent intimacy tolerated by the Queen, when Count Artois bounded into the room. The countess pretended to go, but he stopped her by bowing to so pretty a person.

The Queen presented her.

"Valois? oh, do not let me drive you away," said the prince.

The Queen made a sign to Andrea who detained Jeanne, understanding that the mistress wanted to repay her presently

"Returned from wolf-hunting?" queried the Queen, giving her hand to her brother in the prevalent English fashion.

"Yes, I killed seven—at least the huntsmen said so—," he rejoined laughingly. "That is seven hundred livres, for they are worth a hundred a-head. I would give the lot to have a shot at one of these pestilent news-mongers."

"Then you have heard the libel?"

"Provence told me."

"That makes three who heard it of him," said the Queen. "he is an unwearied story-teller. In what shape did you get it?"

"So that you come out in fine shape—whiter than Venus from the foam. You are also likened to a lady of the past whose name begins in Hell and ends in N, as the algebraists say."

"Fair Helen of Troy? so Provence wrote the verses appearing on the subject in the *Mercury*?"

"I dare say he did. But as for the Mesmer's Bath affair, the bath is washed out."

"What a horrid pun!"

"Never mind with what weapons your champion fights. But it was lucky you had Princess Lamballe with you, and that Lady Lamotte met you and prevented you going too far."

"What, do you know that the countess was there?"

"When Provence tells a story he gives the whole of it. And again, Lady Lamotte might not have been here at Versailles to give her testimony. Of course you will say that virtue and innocence are like violets, no need to be seen to be known

they are about; but violets are made into posies which are sniffed at and flung aside. That is my moral."

"A pretty one!"

"I take things as I find them, and thus I maintain that you are lucky to be saved from the Bath scandal and"—he whispered in her ear—"the Opera Ball affair."

"What ball? I do not understand you."

He laughed.

"What a fool I am not to keep the secret dark."

The words "Ball" and "Opera" had reached Lady Lamotte who redoubled her attention.

"Mum's the word," said the prince.

"Not at all. Explain," said the Queen.

"If you are not jesting and you do want me to speak out, let it be elsewhere than here," and Artois indicated Jeanne and Andrea.

"Here, here—there cannot be too large an audience for explanations."

"Mind!"

"I risk everything."

"Were you not at the last Opera Ball?"

"I? do you think I was there?" she exclaimed.

"Certainly, for I saw you."

"This is too much. Better say you spoke to me? that would be still more funny."

"Faith. I was going to, but a rush of dancers separated us."

"You are mad."

"I was sure you would say so. I ought not to have exposed myself to it, but it is my own fault."

The Queen rose and paced the chamber with agitation, the count watching her astonishment while Andrea felt fear and disquiet.

Jeanne dug her nails into her hands to divert her emotion.

"My dear brother," said the Queen, stopping, "say that you made up this tale."

"Just so," he replied, winking: "I forged it. Pray excuse me."

"You do not understand me," she vehemently cried. "Yes, or no, before these ladies, retract what you said. Do not lie—do not palter."

The two ladies eclipsed themselves behind the Gobelins hangings.

"No," said the Queen, calling them back, "the count persists that he saw me. Prove this."

"Why, I was with Marshal Richelieu, Calonne, and—everybody. Your mask fell off, a rash thing: but you hurried off on the arm of your escort. He wore a blue domino."

"You will make me frantic." She ran her hand over her brow. "What day was this?"

"Saturday, the day I went off to the hunt. You would be sleeping the next morning or I should have seen you before I went, and spoken on this subject. Do not trouble about it—they may think it was the King with you—but he spoke German, and the only other language the King knows is English."

"German? wait, I have a disproof."

She called Lady Misery.

"Call Laurent, while about it," said Artois, laughing. "He will say anything—I know, for I founded that cannon! he will not fire on me."

"Oh, not to be believed," groaned the Queen, in heat.

"I would believe you, if you were less enraged, but how to shut up the others?"

"Others saw me, did they? well, show them to me."

"There was Colonel Taverney, this lady's brother, to begin with."

"My brother?" cried Andrea. "My brother called as witness on this charge?"

Philip was coming joyfully to Versailles palace as he had performed a duty to the Queen. He was met and brought into her presence.

"Colonel," said the Queen, running to meet him, "you are incapable of lying?"

"I should have learnt that in General Washington's service if it had not been natural."

"Then, tell me, frankly, have you seen me within a week in any public resort?"

He was hushed, after answering "Yes."

"Do not spare me. My brother says it was at the Opera Ball. Where did you see me?"

"Like my Lord Artois, at the Opera Ball."

The Queen sank as though struck by lightning, on a sofa, but she was prompt to rise.

"It could not be," she replied. "Have a care, Colonel Taverny. I notice that you are putting on Puritanicairs here; all very well with General Lafayette in America, but we are polite, straightforward folk at Versailles."

"Your Majesty is unfair to Colonel Taverny," broke in Andrea, pale with choler and indignation. "If the Knight of Redcastle says he saw something, he did see it."

"You, to turn against me?" cried Marie Antoinette. "Only one thing is lacking—you ought to have been there, too. I have enemies trying to slay me, and my friends—how they defend me! But one witness is not enough to back a charge."

"You call to my mind," said Artois, "that at the time of seeing you and concluding that the Blue Domino was not the King, I fancied that it was the nephew of Commodore Suffren. What was the name of that dauntless officer who nailed the flag to the mast? you welcomed him so warmly the other day that I thought he was your guard of honor."

The Queen blushed, but Andrea turned more pale till she looked like the dead. They looked at each other and shuddered to see how both were affected. Taverny also looked like a corpse, as he muttered:

"Captain Charny."

"That is it—Charny," said Artois. "Is it not a fact that the Blue Domino bore a likeness to Captain Charny, Colonel Taverny?"

The young gentleman, stifling, faltered that he had not remarked the likeness.

"But I saw my error immediately, for Count Charny appeared to my view. He was by Richelieu, facing you, at the time when you dropped your mask, sister."

"Then he saw me?" screamed the Queen, beyond all prudence.

"Unless he were blind," returned the prince.



The Queen lifted her hands in despair but presently rang the bell.

"To send for Count Charny?" said Taverney. "I—I do not believe he is at Versailles; he is, I believe, not quite well."

"The matter is important enough for him to come. I am not very well, gentlemen, but I would walk barefoot to the world's end to prove——"

Andrea, as Philip went up to her with a breaking heart, started as she gazed out of the window.

"You say Count Charny is unwell, when there he comes."

Forgetting everything, the Queen opened the sash with extraordinary vigor, calling :

"Count Charny!"

The naval officer looked up and proceeded towards the palace with fright and amazement.

---

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE HUSBAND'S ALIBI.

CHARNY entered the royal rooms, some what pale but erect and with no pain apparent. Before the illustrious company he assumed the rigid bearing of the military man and courtier.

"Be careful, sister," whispered Artois, "you are questioning too many persons."

"Brother, I shall question everybody until I meet some one who beares me out."

Charny, seeing Taverney, saluted him courteously, but a glance showed that they shared some secret between them.

"Count Charny," began the Queen, "these gentlemen say you were at the Opera Ball. Tell me who you saw there?"

"According to the precedence of quality, I saw your Majesty, when she let her mask fall," replied the captain.

"Look at me steadily and say you are sure," she said in a voice beginning to show sobbing while she crumpled the ends of her lace neckherchief.

"Your Majesty's features are impressed on all your subjects' hearts. To see you once is to see you forever."

Philip and Andrea looked at each other. Their griefs and jealousy formed a sorrowful alliance.

"Count, I assure you that I was not at the Opera Ball."

"Oh, your Majesty can go anywhere she likes," rejoined the officer, deeply bowing as she had gone up to him. "A den of iniquity would be purified did you set foot in it."

"I do not ask for excuse for my steps," said she. "I beg you to believe that I was not there."

"I will believe whatever your Majesty orders," answered the count, moved to his heart by the Queen's persistency, and the tender humility of so proud a woman.

"Sister, this is too much," whispered Artois.

"They believe it," moaned the royal lady, bewildered with anger.

Disheartened, she fell on a chair, and dashed away a tear which pride could not dry up in the corner of her eye.

"Sister, forgive me," pleaded Artois tenderly, "you are surrounded by devoted friends. We alone know this secret which frightens you beyond measure: and it will be locked up in our hearts for life entire."

"But I do not wish there to be any secret."

"Hark," interrupted Andrea: "here comes the King!"

"So much the better. He is my sole friend and he is welcome, for he would not pronounce me guilty, even if he believed me in fault."

Indeed, the King, whose calm face contrasted with the agitated ones which he met, was like an angel's of peace.

But as soon as he heard that the fresh slander was the work of friends, not enemies, his brow was clouded with mortal disquiet.

Lady Lamotte noted this. With a single word she could put an end to such lamentable distress and save the Queen for the future. But her heart did not move and her interest carried her in another direction. It was no longer time, she thought, as she had suppressed the truth about the woman at Mesmer's bath-tub: and by admitting that she had acted falsely once, she ruined herself. So the new favorite held her tongue.

"The Opera Ball of Saturday," said the King.

"Yes, Sire. Oh, what did I do on Saturday night? I am really going mad, for I cannot recall what happened on that night."

Suddenly the King went up to her, with expanding eyes and laughing mien holding out his hands.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed. "Saturday? You need not call any witness save your waiting-woman, who let me into your own rooms at eleven that night."

"Oh, it was so, Sire!" cried the Queen, enraptured.

She threw herself into his arms. Red and confused, she hid her face on her husband's bosom.

"Thank God," exclaimed Artois: "I would not lose this sight for a million! I will go and buy spectacles for the future."

Taverney was leaning against the hangings, pale as a shroud. Charny was wiping his forehead, though he looked cold and impassible.

"This is why," said the King, dwelling on the effect he had produced, "it is impossible that the Queen should have been to the Ball. Believe what you like; the Queen, I am sure, will be content in my belief in her."

"Humph," muttered Artois: "Provence may think what he pleases but I defy his wife to prove this kind of alibi when he is accused of staying out all night."

"Charles, I am going with you," said the King, after a kiss to his wife.

"Are you not in attendance on Count Artois?" questioned the Queen sternly as Philip had not stirred.

He rose suddenly, as the blood flew to his eyes and temples. He was so overcome that he had hardly the strength to bow, look at his sister, throw a terrible glance on Charny, and master his expression of insane grief. He went forth, the Queen retaining Andrea and Captain Charny.

Andrea suffered between jealousy and sisterly love. Her heart would have broken if she had been obliged to go out to console her brother, leaving Charny with the Queen and Lady Lamotte. She divined that Lamotte would be no obstacle in the interview by her mock modest and familiar bearing.

Was it love for Charny that she felt?

No, she would have said to herself, it does not spring up thus in the cold atmosphere of the court. It is a scarce plant, prone to growing in pure, generous, virgin hearts, and not driving roots in one profaned by dreadful remembrance and chilled by tears concentrated during years. No, no, it could not be love that Andrea felt for George Charny. She repulsed the idea for she had vowed to love no one on the earth.

But then why had she been pained to see the Queen single out Charny? it certainly was jealousy. But she was jealous not because a man loved another than her but because a married woman inspired, welcomed and authorized his love.

But when she saw Charny on the cold night; watching her inquiringly and enwrapping her in a mesh of sympathy, she no longer felt the strange reserve which she wore for the courtiers. For this man she was a woman. He had aroused youth in her and galvanized the dead; he had made the marble blush of which was formed this human Diana.

Hence it was agony to her to have another woman clip the wings of her newborn fondling, and confiscate the dream which she had a glimpse of through the golden gates.

Not willing to let the Queen have an interview with Charny, she let her brother go, but she did not join in the conversation.

She almost turned her back to the trio as she sat in the angle nook, with Lady Lamotte in a window recess in pretended timidity, while the count stood, bowing forward, near the seated Queen. He appeared in pain, and this attitude did not displease the Queen.

"This proves that we have enemies," she began speaking to her thoughts. "Would you believe such miserable things take place at the Court of France, Lord Charny? On your ships what a pleasure it must be, to dwell under the open sky and boundless sea! Storm may come and the fire of battle, but what does that matter if you escape them, and win the thanks of the King, while the people bless your name. I can thank the foes who fling lead and shot, and the foam of the billow upon us, they only threaten us with death."

"There can be no enemies, worthy of your Majesty," replied

the count ; " the eagle looks down on serpents as not antagonists ; these things crawling in the mud do not annoy those who soar in the ether."

"My lord," the Queen hastened to retort ; "you return safe and scund from the battle ; but though we escape the slings of siander, it has an effect on us, and we fear afterwards to meet the eyes of those who remember that friends joined with foes in their attacks."

Andrea anxiously waited the gentleman's answer, trembling lest he should reply with the affectionate consolation she besought. But he did not speak, seeking a support on the back of a chair and lost color.

"Oh," cried the Queen, "used to the sharp sea sir, you stifle in the palace——"

"That is not it," faltered Charny, "but I am on duty at two o'clock, and unless your Majesty orders me to stay——"

"Not at all ! we know what an order is, eh, Andrea ?" said Marie Antoinette merrily. "You can go," she added to the captain, somewhat vexed.

He hastily bowed and left. But instantly was heard a moan and the sound of a fall.

Charny's hurried exit had struck the Queen as so extraordinary that she had followed him with her glance. She raised the tapestry, and screamed faintly, making as though to rush forth.

Andrea was between her and the door. Their eyes met. Between the pair Lady Lamotte saw that Charny had fallen into the arms of a guardsman, while servants were running up.

Frowning and thoughtful, Marie Antoinette returned to her seat.

"How strange that Lord Charny seems still to doubt," said she, 'after the King's word "

"My brother was convinced," observed Andrea.

"It would be bad," continued the Queen, not hearing : " he can not have the pure, upright heart I thought was his. But why should he think he saw me, like the others ? Must we not seek the reason for all this. Andrea ?"

"Your Majesty is right, and I am sure Lady Lamotte will agree."

"They asserted I was at Mesmer's, as I was, but I did not act as was ascribed to me. They say I was at the Opera, where I was not. I think I can hit on the truth. Let Chief of Police Crosne be brought to me," she commanded of Lady Misery.

---

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CHIEF OF POLICE.

CHIEF CROSNE, a very polite man, was most perplexed by the King extricating the Queen from her quandary. He felt that he must meet the woman's wrath and the Queen's indignation. But he courageously determined to do his duty and his urbanity served him as shield against the first shocks.

He entered the royal presence smiling, but the lady did not smile.

"I want you to clear this matter up. You ought to know the cause of it. I attribute the effects by which I have suffered to the bad behavior of some person who resembles me, and who misbehaves herself in public where you and your men see her for me."

"A resemblance!" vociferated Crosne, not remarking Andrea's outcry and Lady Lamotte's fleeting emotion. "But I cannot admit it without such a difference as would not deceive an expert eye."

"I could furnish an example," interrupted Andrea. "When we lived in our country seat, at the time when your Majesty as the Dauphiness first came into France, we had a maid-servant named Nicole Legay who so much resembled your Majesty that I had to keep her in the background."

"You hear? oh, what has become of her?"

"She has disappeared. She was an aspiring, restless, ambitious thing, and making some bad acquaintance she ran away from Trianon."

"Carrying away some jewels?"

"No, I had nothing to lose."

"Jeanne had listened with attention easily comprehended.

"There—a woman exists who is my likeness, and you did

not know it, Chief Crosne," said the Queen. "Confess that your police is badly constituted."

"Nay, your Majesty. Magistrates are but men. I do not command events, especially such as are difficult of comprehension by our minds. My police not well constituted when I knew all about your Majesty's movements? When my detectors saw you go to the house of this lady, in St. Claude Street? to Mesmer's, with Princess Lamballe? to the Opera—"

The Queen quickly raised her head.

"Let me say so, since my men only saw what my Lord Artois saw, and he ought to know his sister. My police not well constituted? Let me tell you that my men followed up the slander finely till they almost saw Count Charny cane the lampoonist Reteau."

"Count Charny caned the lampoonist?" cried the Queen.

"The welts are still red on the scoundrel's back, the deed is so recent; but it was not he who ran to complain to the police. We had to find that out; and it required some sharpness in 'shadowing,' I can tell you, to learn about the duel which followed the cudgeling."

"Count Charny stooped to cross swords with that inkslinger?"

"Oh, no, a quilldriver could not deal the swordthrust which prostrated my lord, just now in the other room."

"Wounded? he is wounded!" exclaimed Antoinette. "When and how? you are making some mistake."

"I know it thoroughly," replied Crosne, "and you might not blame me this time when I am not at fault."

"He was in pain, I saw that," exclaimed Andrea, in such a tone that the Queen divined hostility, and sharply turned.

"What do you say?" said Marie Antoinette, as Andrea met her thrust with energy. "You remarked that the gentleman was ailing and you said not a word?"

As Andrea did not speak, Jeanne flew to her rescue, to try to make the favorite her friend.

"I also perceived that Count Charny could hardly keep his feet while your Majesty was honoring him with speech," she said,

"With difficulty, yes," went on the proud Andrea, not thanking the intervener with so much as a look.

Crosne enjoyed the study of the trio, none, except Jeanne, suspecting the examination of the Chief of Police.

"With whom and for what reason did Count Charny fight?" asked the Queen.

"With a nobleman who—but it is useless to bring it up, for they are good friends now, and were chatting together in your Majesty's presence at last accounts. It is not twenty minutes since the vanquisher went forth from here."

"Colonel Taverny?" exclaimed the Queen, with a flash of ire.

"My brother," murmured Andrea, reproaching herself for having been so selfish as not to guess.

The Queen clapped her hands, a token in her of hottest anger.

"Unseemly, how very unseemly," she said. "Red Indian manners brought over from America. I will not tolerate them."

Crosne and Andrea both hung their heads.

"Because one has roved the woods with Lafayette and Washington, my court is to be transformed into an Indian ambush? No, and no again. Andrea, you ought to know why your brother fought."

"I can learn; but we might inquire of Count Charny," she said, with pale cheeks but brilliant eyes.

"I am not asking what Count Charny did, but what was done by Colonel Taverny," resumed the Queen, arrogantly.

"My brother fights solely in your Majesty's service," rejoined the lady, letting her words fall one by one.

"Do you mean to imply that Count Charny fought on the other side?"

"I have the honor to point out to your Majesty that I am speaking about my brother, and nobody else."

It took all the other's power to remain calm. She rose, went up and down the room, feigned to see herself in her mirror, and took up a book from a case: but she tossed it aside after a few seconds.

"Thanks, you have convinced me of the excellence of your police," said she to Crosne. "My head is a little upset by all



these suppositions. Mind that you look into that idea of a woman in my likeness. Good bye!"

She held out her hand with supreme grace, and he went away happy and better informed to boot.

Andrea made a long, deep reverence, to which the Queen nodded carelessly without any apparent rancor.

Jeanne was preparing to leave also, but Lady Misery announced "Boehmer and Bossange."

These were the court jewellers, come by appointment.

"Quite right," said Marie Antoinette. "Pray stay, Lady Lamotte, I want the King to be completely reconciled with you."

So saying, she watched Andrea's countenance in the glass, perhaps trying to sting the favorite with the elevation of a rival: but Mdlle. Taverney went out without starting or frowning.

"Steel," muttered the Queen. "The Tavernays are steel, but gold inlaid."

---

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE TEMPTRESS.

IN dress suits, the two jewelers presented themselves, multiplying their bows until they had reached the sovereign.

"Of course, Jewelers come only to talk of jewels," said she; "you come at a bad time, for I have no spare cash."

"We have not come to offer goods," said Boehmer, the spokesman of the partnership, "but to fulfill a duty. The business is about that diamond necklace which your Majesty did not care to take."

"I grant it a very handsome one," returned Marie Antoinette smiling.

"So handsome that none but your Majesty is meet to wear it."

"I am comforted," said the royal lady, with a slight sigh noticed by Jeanne Lamotte, "by thinking of its cost—a million and a half. In these hard times, when the love of the people

grows cold like the sunshine of heaven, no sovereigns can afford to buy such diamond ornaments."

"A million and a half!" repeated Lady Lamotte, like an echo.

"So that no one will have it since I must refuse. You will tell me that it will break up in smaller sets—well, I do not covet two or three diamonds, though sixty in a string tempt me, I confess."

She rubbed her hands with satisfaction from the wish to torment the jewelers a little.

"Your Majesty is in error on that point," said Boehmer "and herein lies our duty. The necklace is disposed of."

"Sold?" exclaimed the Queen, showing that her self-denial was not thorough.

"It is a state secret, but not for your Majesty. The Ambassador of Portugal has managed the business for his sovereign."

"We have no representative of the Braganzas in Paris," objected the Queen.

"Oh, Don Souza came incog."

"So much the better for our sister of Portugal," said the French Queen after wavering slightly; "the gems are fine. Let us say no more about them."

"Still if——"

"Do you know what they are talking about?" said the Queen to Lady Lamotte. "What a pity they will go away without your seeing them."

"They are here," said Boehmer, whipping out the jewel-case from inside his crush hat, worn under his arm.

"Look, countess, you are a woman and they will amuse you."

She shifted the china-topped stand on which the jeweller had opened the case so as to set the necklace in the best light to show off the fire from the innumerable facets.

Jeanne uttered a scream of admiration. Nothing could be more lovely; tongues of flame seemed darting, yellow, red and white as pure light itself. Boehmer artfully fanned with the case to make the lustre pour out.

"Admirable," muttered Jeanne.

"A million and a half to be held in the hollow of the hand," remarked Marie Antoinette with affectation of philosophical unconcern which her husband might not have really displayed.

Jeanne saw something else than disdain and she expected to overcome it.

"The gentleman is right," she said; "no queen is worthy to wear this save your Majesty."

"We have refused it."

"Oh, though the people rejoice in your Majesty preferring a ship of war to a necklace, the nobility would esteem it more queenly to choose the necklace above the ship."

"Yes," added Jeanne, "a million and a half in such gems, hanging round your neck, would make all women die of envy though they were Cleopatras, and Venuses."

Snatching up the collar, she so skillfully slipped it round the Queen's neck that she found herself magically encircled by the phosphorescent and variegated colors.

"Your Majesty is sublime," cried Jeanne.

Approaching a mirror, Marie Antoinette was dazzled. Her neck, fine and supple as Lady Jane Grey's, a lily stalk destined like the flower to fall beneath the steel, gracefully rose from the ring of radiance. She was superb, and, lovers or subjects, all would have bowed to her.

"It has been worn by your Majesty," said Boehmer, "and must remain your property."

"Nay, I have sported long enough with it——"

"Continue the diversion till the morrow——"

"However late, the reckoning it must come."

"But gems like them are the same as money. In a hundred years they will represent the same amount to the Crown."

"If you will give me a million and a half," said the Queen to Jeanne, "you would see them still on me."

"Oh, if I only had the money," cried the countess.

But in vain did the jewelers spend a quarter of an hour in packing up; the Queen was obdurate, though still she sighed:

After the jewelers had gone, she said:

"Countess, the King does not come. We must put off the arrangement to another occasion. But I will bear you in mind."

Jeanne kissed her hand as with all her heart, and went out, leaving Marie Antoinette possessed with chagrin and vertigo.

"She feels desires and her impotence, thought Jeanne La motte. "And she is a queen—no, not a queen, only a woman."

---

## CHAPTER XXV.

### AMBITION RESEMBLING LOVE.

It was with a smile on her lips and beaming brow that Jeanne of Valois went to her elegant, comfortable and delightful house which was her palace, and was owed to Cardinal Rohan.

Really, she owed him some return, and she formed a plan to benefit him, while benefitting herself, of course, while awaiting his coming.

Like one of those will-of-the-wisps which illuminate a rugged valley, the royal and womanly longing had opened to the intriguante's eyes all the folded secrets of a spirit too haughty, for that matter, to take much precaution to conceal them.

Jeanne was intoxicated with the idea of the diamonds in their white satin nest standing for a million and a half of livres

This was better than an estate—it was visible wealth, blazing yet substantial. Since the Queen longed for it, Jeanne might sigh.

"Ah, dear Jeanne," said the cardinal, "glad to see you, for you have become so necessary to me that the day is dark without you. Have you returned in good health from Versailles?"

"Enchanted" for the Queen received me nicely. I have had three hours private audience with her."

"Three hours with her?" repeated the cardinal who envied her triumphal air. "How fortunate you are! How many things a sharp woman like you could say in that time"

"I lost none."

"But I wager you never once thought of me."

"Ingrate! I spoke of no one else."

"You spoke of me to the Queen?" cried the prelate, whose heart began to throb while his voice betrayed his emotion.

Jeanne smiled for she knew what would interest the churchman in her account as well as he did himself. He appeared to linger only over what the Queen had said for Jeanne, but she dwelt on what the Queen had said about Rohan.

"Well, you see that the countess of Lamotte Valois has come into her rank. She is a lady of the court. In a little while she will count among the proudest ladies. She may open her hand and hold it out to whom she likes."

"I hope she will like those who love her," retured the prince, pressing on the hand alluded to a burning kiss.

During supper they continued the conversation which was a compact between two who deceived each other because they were willing to be deceived.

"Honcrs await you," he said : " the Queen is generous and nothing is denied those she favored. She has the rare knack of giving a little to a number and a great deal to a few "

"But is she rich to do this?" questioned Lady Lamotte.

"She can procure the means , no treasurer could refuse her, except perhaps Turgot."

" But I have seen her unable to gratify herself. Do you know how strong a woman's desire is? well, she has had to refuse the diamond necklace offered by the court jewelers."

" An old story! Yes, the King offered them to her, and she rejected it that the funds might go to build a man-of-war."

"You who understand women, do you not see that she only wanted to say a bright thing, one of those which are every where repeated. She had no sooner rejected it than she yearned for it worse than ever."

"Prove this. A flower in her bodice is worth all the gems in the world."

"I can easily prove ; for I have seen and touched the necklace, nay, tried it on the Queen. It is marvelously handsome, and I could not sleep or eat if I had thus once worn it. But it is fit for the Queen alone, and that is why she desires it."

"I repeat that the King offered it."

"And I say that such jewels are most liked when offered by those who cannot force acceptance."

"I do not clearly follow you," said the cardinal, looking at the speaker with more attention.

"In plain terms the Queen so longs for the necklace that she would make the Prime Minister of the man who obtained it for her. You want to be the Minister of this realm?"

"Oh, countess!"

"Would you rather I should not speak my thoughts?" But never mind, it is clear that you are not the man to throw away a million and a half on a royal caprice. Take what I said as mere chatter. I am like the parrots. I was dazed in the sunshine and fall to repeating when it is warm again. Ah, my lord, it is a hard test for a lady from the country to have a day at court and look the eagle in the face. Let us change the subject."

"The subject, not the Queen," said Rohan, gallantly.

"Very well," said she, but thought to herself, "the hook has caught."

Indeed, while talking of changing the theme, the cardinal said: "Was not Boehmer accompanied by Bossange, his partner, a tall, dry man? I have seen them together at their place of business, on the New Bridge."

"Côme, come, the fish bites more and more," thought Jeanne.

She was right, for next day, the cardinal paid a visit to the court jewelers, and on the next as a spy reporter to the intriguing woman.

Such a prince as Rohan would not chaffer; such tradesmen as Boehmer and Bossange would not lose a good customer. The diamond necklace would be retained in France.

The prince had the necklace, and so never had he a more charming reception at supper than that Jeanne accorded him when he brought this news.

"You will be the Prime Minister," said Jeanne drinking the wine which he had sent to her with the reply to her invitation.

"Yes, everything tends that way: my birth, my acquaintance with political business, marked kindness that foreign powers accord me, and the sympathy of our people."

"You have only to overcome the Queen's dislike. You

must do that for whom she likes the King will welcome."

"Then all is lost, for the Queen will not be bribed by a diamond necklace."

"You may be wrong. It is yours?"

Yes, the Ambassador of Portugal to buy it was a sharper, one of a band of swindlers, headed by a notorious gamester,—Captain Beausire—my interposition to buy the jewel, my claim that the Queen of France had the refusal, luckily led to an investigation and the cheat was exposed. Is it useless now?"

"No, for the Queen will see by its light that you love her. We agreed to call things by their proper names. Leave all to me, and you may be the *Cardinal Mazarin* of this new *Anne of Austria*."

The pair separated on these excellent terms.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### JEANNE THE FAVORITE.

MISTRESS of such a secret rich in such a lookout, supported on two sides, Jeanne felt strong enough to lift the world.

The panorama before her inexhaustible imagination was to appear before the court as the Last of the Valois, with a hundred thousand a year, her husband a duke, herself the Queen's favorite, and in this era of storms and plots to govern the realm by governing the King through Marie Antoinette.

She went to Versailles without a letter of invitation, trusting to her good luck. She was right. All the court officials had noticed how glad Marie Antoinette was to have her society, and an usher conducted her to the sitting-room adjoining the Queen's baths.

"I have not been able to speak to the King on your behalf," began the Queen

"Ah, your Majesty has done so much for me that I ought not to look for more. I do not come on my own suit, but on matters of urgency for another."

The Queen sent her attendants away.

"I believe I stated to your Majesty all the obligation under which I was to Cardinal Rohan?"

"I do not know," said the Queen, frowning.

"I thought I mentioned it: but—never mind! enough that he paid me a visit to see how I was faring whereupon I told him that I probably would not be a burden to him any longer as your Majesty had kindly taken me under her wing. I said, though, that I might regret it as accident had shown me that your Majesty was so generous as to do too much for sweet charity's sake—that is, she was unable to gratify herself with a jewel the other day. I said it was a pity that magnificent necklace should go into another country, when, with a little delay——"

"But it was bought by Portugal!"

Jeanne softly shook her head.

"No?"

"The Prince of Rohan has bought it."

"Ah," said the Queen, coldly, after repressing a start.

"What Prince Rohan did was splendid," said Jeanne with eloquence full of fire and gush; "a spirit like your Majesty's can but sympathize with what is so lofty and sensitive. Scarcely had he heard from me that your Majesty was temporarily distressed than he exclaimed:

"What, a Queen of my country refuse herself what a contractor's wife would treat herself to—those diamonds be worn, after touching her neck, by a banker's daughter!"

"He did not know about this supposed offer from Portugal; when he did, his indignation increased.

"This is no longer a question of the Queen's pleasure, but of the royal dignity. I know the spirit in foreign courts to be vanity and ostentation. Portugal will laugh at the Queen of France being too poor to satisfy a legitimate wish; but I will not allow my monarch to be mocked at. Never!" He flounced away, and I learnt later that he had bought the diamond necklace."

"Cardinal Rohan is a worldly churchman; are you sure it is not to shine on a beauty's neck?"

"I am sure he would grind it to dust rather than see it sparkle on another than your Majesty."



Marie Antoinette reflected, and all that passed in her mind was reflected without a cloud on her countenance.

"What Prince Rohan did was handsome, a noble deed of delicate devotion."

Jeanne greedily drank in the words.

"You will thank Prince Rohan and add that his friendship for me is proven, and I accept it with the understanding I will repay it. It is his loan not his gift I accept. The tradesman wanted cash?"

"Two hundred thousand livres were paid on the nail."

"That is my quarter's allowance from the King. It was sent me this morning in advance."

As directed, Jeanne took a pocket-book from a drawer, in which was the sum stated.

"Carry that to the cardinal with my repeated thanks. Tell him that I will arrange to repay him regularly thus. The interest will be also arranged for. Thus I shall have the much desired necklace and though I may be hampered, the King will not be. I will have gained one friend who served me daintily," and she added reflecting: "Another who divined me."

Jeanne leaped upon her hand.

"Countess," she said in a low voice as if she feared to hear herself speak: "you will inform Prince Rohan that he will be welcome at Versailles to receive my thanks in person."

Jeanne darted out of the palace, maddened rather than intoxicated with joy and satiated pride. She clutched the bank-notes like a vulture.

She drove in her carriage straight to Rohan House, where, at the report of her mission and that the Queen would feel pleasure in seeing the cardinal at Versailles, he turned white as a youth under the first kiss of love.

"Ha, ha," thought Jeanne, "this is more earnest than I supposed. I dreamt of a duchy, and a large revenue, but I may look to a principality, and half a million a-year: for Rohan is not working through ambition or avarice, but love!"

He recovered quickly. Gladness is not a malady which lasts long: as he had a superior mind, he thought he should talk business with Jeanne to whom he could no longer talk love.

"The Queen who is reported to have no money," said the lady, "wants to pay you as you are paying Boehmer, with the difference that thus she keeps the business close while all Paris would know if she had acted directly. You have become her paying teller, one who will meet the demands if she should be embarrassed. She is happy to have the offering and she pays back—ask no more."

"Pays back?"

Jeanne put the pocketbook on the table.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand livres in Treasury notes, sent in the packet by the Queen. I have counted them."

"That is not the point. That is the Queen's pocketbook?"

"Would you like to keep that?"

"Greatly," sighed Rohan.

"Do so if it pleases you," said the countess with a gracious smile.

"Countess, you are the most precious and shrewdest of friends."

"No, I have only one merit: I carry out your wishes with much good fortune and more zeal."

"I am worthy you, for while you have been away, I have worked for you. A banker came to interest me in a speculation for the sake of my title. I committed myself, on condition you had so many paid-up shares and the gains are a hundred per cent."

He took twenty-five thousand livres from the Queen's payment and handed them to Jeanne.

"I am more pleased at the flattery of your thinking of me."

"Always," he replied.

"I hope to see you soon at Versailles," said she, leaving with him a list of the payments to be arranged by the Queen, the next to be in a month, of five hundred thousand livres.

---

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## TRUTH IN DELIRIUM.

THE brave navel officer, whom man and the elements had never made to blench, had fled with fear to lose his senses before two women, the Queen and Andrea Taverney.

In the midst of the ante-room he had reeled and would have fallen but for an usher who ran to his aid. While they were doing their best for him, the King came along and, while he suspected some secret in the young officer's insisting it was an old wound broken out afresh—when he remembered Commodore Suffren remarking that his nephew had never been wounded—he promptly said :

"I do not wish the nephew of my dear Suffren to run any risk by being taken to his lodgings. Let him be placed in comfort in the palace and have Dr. Louis called."

Dr. Louis was the household physician, a wise and modest man, courageous toiler in the vast field of science where he may be most honored who reaps the harvest but the more honorable is he who sows.

The Queen was waiting for the news of the officer for which she had sent her lady when the doctor himself entered.

"It is not an old wound, but a recent one," he said ; "but the main thing is that Count Charny is in fever."

"Really ?" returned the Queen : "I had no idea that fever set in so soon ?"

"There are various kinds of fevers," replied the doctor, glancing at her.

"My dear Louis, you alarm me. Usually so calm, you look odd this evening. If there be any secret attached to Count Charny's fever, tell me all about it, for you know how inquisitive I am."

"Then question me, for I tell a story badly, though I can answer like a book if queries are put to me."

"Well, I ask how the Charny fever is ?"

"Now I thought you would want to know why I have locked him up in one of my own rooms, instead of leaving him in the gallery or the Guards officers' quarters."

"I ask you this now ; for it is very astonishing."

"I have done it for the Charny fever is not an ordinary sort. He has delirium at the start."

"Oh," sighed the Queen, clasping her hands.

"And," pursued the doctor, going up to her, "he says a number of things which it would not be good for anybody to hear."

"You mean that his ideas are very highflown, perhaps ?"

"At least they fly very high."

"Count Charny," said the Queen, composing her features and speaking with the coolness always accompanying the actions of those bred to command the respect of others and self-esteem. "is dear to me as the nephew of our great naval hero. He has done me services so that I am bound to play the friend towards him. Tell me the truth, which I ought to know and wish so to hear."

"But I cannot tell it," responded Dr. Louis, "and the only means for your Majesty to hear it is to go and listen. So that if the poor young gentleman says anything wrong, the Queen will bear no ill-will to the indiscreet person who surprised the secret or the imprudent one who stifled it."

"But I cannot take a step without a spy upon me," said she.

"You will have merely to go through a hall with a door at either end. I will fasten the one we go in by, and no one will be near your Majesty."

Taking the doctor's arm, she glided through the rooms, quivering with curiosity.

Having fastened the passage door behind them, Louis alone walked into the other room.

Wearing his uniform breeches, of which the doctor had loosed the buckle, his silk stockings showing opal and pearly spiral gleams on the muscular leg, his arms hanging as if lifeless stiff in the crumpled sleeves, Charny had but one sensation. Prostrated, weakened, inert, his body lived but by the flame in his brain. It was a flame indeed which fantastically softened incidents of his love.

He was telling himself of the adventure in the cab with the German lady on the winter night.

"German," he said

"Yes, on the Road to Versailles," said the doctor: "we had that before."

"Queen of France" said Charny abruptly

"Is that all?" said the doctor; "do you hear that?"

"It is frightful," went on the patient, "to love an angel, a woman, to the point of giving up one's life for her, and when one goes up to her see only a queen of velvet and gold, a doll without a heart."

"Ho, ho," laughed the doctor forcedly.

"And a married woman" went on the other, not heeding, "come, my beloved let us snatch a few hours and in them live the life of the elect. Then let death come, which is only what we felt when we were not together."

"Not badly argued for a fever-stricken man," commented the doctor. "But the morality is rather weak."

"But her children—she has two children," cried Charny: "she would not leave her children."

"They are indeed stumbling-blocks," replied Dr. Louis, wiping the patient's face, with a sublime mingling of jest and kindness.

"They can be carried away easily in a horse-cloak. Just so, Charny my boy; you bear the mamma in your arms, light as a robin; and you might lug the children along with Marie—Ah!" He uttered a terrible cry. "No the children of a king are a load which would break down Atlas himself."

The doctor quitted his patient and went to the Queen, cold and trembling as she stood. He took her hand, which had caught his shivering.

"You are right," she breathed: "it is a greater danger than delirium that he runs."

"But he is quieted. Listen."

Charny sat up and he clasped his hands as he stared into vacancy,

"Marie," his sweet, thrilling voice said, "I am well aware that you love me. I shall never tell. Your hand fell upon mine in the coach, and I thought I should die of joy. But I

will never utter the secret of my life. My blood may flow from the wound inflicted by one who was jealous of the love he divined, but the secret will never issue from me. Say nothing—since you blush at seeing me, I have nothing to learn from you ”

“I have heard enough,” stammered the Queen, so troubled that she turned to flee.

“But should the King want to see your ward?”

“I can say—advise nothing! it would be a misfortune, but this sight breaks my heart.”

“You have caught his fever: your pulse has run up to a hundred.”

The Queen shook her hand free and fled.

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE OTHER.

THE doctor remained thoughtful as he watched the Queen depart.

“Under this roof are mysteries beyond the scope of science,” he mused as he shook his head. “Against one I use the lancet: for the other I arm myself with reproach and pierce the heart: will I cure or kill?”

He closed Charny's eyes, bathed his head in aromatics and vinegar and converted the sick chamber into a paradise.

“There was not only sympathy but influence,” he went on, “The delirium sprang up before the visit and went down when it was made. But hark! she is coming again!”

But the rustle of a dress ceased at the end of the corridor.

“It cannot be the Queen,” he said: “She would not retract a determination no doubt invariable.”

He opened a side-door which enabled him to steal out and see a female figure in the lobby; her long robe came down in motionless folds and she resembled a statue of despair.

The feeble lamp in the corridor did not show her, but a moonbeam fell through a windowpane upon her till a

cloud passed over. The doctor went in silently and going through his rooms suddenly opened the door at which the phantom was waiting.

She uttered a shriek and thrusting out her hands, met the doctor's.

"Who is this?" he challenged, with more pity than menace, for he guessed by her stillness that she was listening rather by the heart than ear.

"Only me, doctor, Andrea Taverney," was the sweet low reply.

He recognized one at whose travail he had assisted.

"Oh, gracious," he said, "is she fallen ill?"

"Who do you mean?" asked Andrea, making the doctor feel he had committed an imprudent act.

"Excuse me, but I saw a woman about, a short time since, but perhaps it was you."

"So there was a lady visitor before me?" inquired Andrea with bunting curiosity which left the hearer no doubt on her state of feeling.

"My dear child, it strikes me we are playing at cross purposes," said he, taking her hand; "Who are you speaking of? what do you want? explain."

"Doctor," said the lady in so sad a voice that it went to the heart, "you usually tell the truth, so do not try to deceive me. Was there a woman here before me?"

"Certainly; Lady Misery came for news of my patient, from the Queen."

"Oh, only she?"

"Now, who else could it be? really, women are inexplicable; though I thought I understood you. But, no, just like the others—I could whip myself! Come to the point, is the Queen recovered?"

"The Queen?"

"Yes, for whom Lady Misery came for me just now; she has a stifling feeling—palpitation of the heart. A sad, incurable complaint. Tell me her news, if you come from her and be off, beside her."

"No, dear doctor," replied Andrea, breathing more easily as she detained him, "I do not come from her, not knowing

she was ailing. Poor Queen, had I known—but I do not know what I am talking about.'

"I see ; but also that you are also not well."

"Doctor," responded Andrea, nearly swooning, "you know that I am nervous and caused dreadful fears in the dark. I went astray in it, and hence my strange state."

"Then why the deuce go about in the dark? Who forces you? but you have wasted ten minutes with me. If you want to chat, let it be more commodiously for my knees give way under me. Here it a seat. The Queen awaits me—so speak out."

"Will he—your patient, not hear us?"

"He? Count Charny? not he, if any other does, I answer for that."

"It is of him I want to speak." Andrea uttered a sigh.

Dr. Louis' silence was chilling : seeing the Queen and her lady moved by the same spring, he judged by the symptoms that it was violent love. Unaware of the Queen's visit, and unable to read in the doctor's mind all his sad kindness and merciful pity, she took his silence for blame, perhaps rudely expressed, and she rose up under the slur though she was dumb.

"You must excuse this step," she said at last ; "for Count Charny is down with a wound from my brother's sword."

"What, Colonel Taverney wounded Charny?" cried the doctor.

"Undoubtedly. Now you know, you must understand my duty to inquire into his condition."

"Oh, excuse me," said the other enchanted that he might be kind. "I was ignorant and could not guess the cause. A duel between young gentlemen is an everyday occurrence—and the only thing to give it any importance would be its being for a woman. For you, for instance."

"For me? no, doctor," deeply sighed the maid of honor. "My Lord Charny has not fought on my behalf."

The other pretended to be satisfied but he wanted to know the foundation for the sigh.

"I see, your brother sent you for the exact bulletin of his antagonist's health?"

"Yes, yes, my brother," exclaimed Andrea.



"I must learn what is in this inflexible heart," he thought, while he looked her in the face. "Well," he said aloud, "I will tell you the whole truth as beseems one interested in knowing it. Report it to your brother, and let him take measures in accordance. Even at present a duel is not agreeable to the King, who does not enforce the edicts against them but he will not allow one that raises scandal. He banishes or imprisons. You know the poor fellow, dying in the next room? if he is not saved by this hour to-morrow of the fever devouring him, he will be a dead man."

Andrea, who had been suffocating, now felt like shrieking, and she dug her nails into her flesh to extinguish in physical pangs the agony of her soul. He could see on her lineaments the frightful ravages the struggle produced.

"My brother will not run away," she replied like a woman of Sparta. "He fought with Lord Charny like a brave man; if he struck him it was in defending himself. If he shall have killed him, heaven will be the judge."

"She has not come on her own behalf?" thought the doctor; "but for the Queen. Let us see how far she will go. How does the Queen take the duel?" he inquired.

"I do not know. What concern is it of hers?" retorted Andrea.

"I thought she held Colonel Taverny in high esteem."

"But he is safe and sound: I expect she will defend him in case he is accused."

"Beaten on both sides of his double supposition, Dr. Louis abandoned the game.

"I am a surgeon, not a mind curer," he mused; "why the mischief, when I know the workings of nerves and muscles so well, should I study the play of feminine whims and passions? Young lady, you apprise me of what I wish to know. Pass the word or not for Colonel Taverny to escape; it is your affair. My duty is to try to save the wounded man—this night, or death will carry him away in another twenty-four hours. Good-night!"

He gently but firmly closed the door in her face.

She was left alone with the horrible reality, as if death, of which the medical gentleman so coldly spoke, were hovering

over that room and trailing its white shroud in that corridor. This chilled her limbs, as she fled to her own rooms and locked herself in.

"God," she burst forth amid burning tears, "Thou art not cruel and unjust. I entreat who have suffered enough in this world, though guiltless of any crime. I have never complained but never doubted Thy mercy. To-day I pray for the life of this man. If this boon be refused me, I will think Thou art a God of gloomy wrath and nameless vengeance—I—nay, I blaspheme, for Thou wilt not deal this stroke. Forgive, Thou who art the Lord of clemency and mercy. Oh, I love him. Now, slay me."

---

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CONVALESCENCE.

No doubt the prayers of Andrea were heard, for Charny came round in a week.

In consequence the Queen had a smiling face when the doctor called, but she changed expression when he again desired her to see his patient.

"But you said he was well?" she objected.

"I was mistaken. He has recovered from the fever, but he is in a deadly monomania. You have destroyed him."

"I? you are surprising. Have I driven him mad?"

"If you are not the cause, you will be, presently," returned the inflexible doctor.

"Give me advice then, as you are a medical adviser," said the royal lady, somewhat subdued.

"Balm or iron will kill or cure. There is no choice of ways out of the maze: only one for the Queen of France: The woman for whom Count Carny lost his wits must restore them. She must have the courage to tear him from his dreams—the gnawing viper which is coiled up in the recesses of his brain."

"Let some one go with me; Mdlle. Taverney, for example."

"She was not in the waiting room;"

"As it is, then," said the Queen, reluctantly; "Ah, it is sadder than you think to go thus with life or death in hand for a sufferer."

"I have to do so every day when I attack a new malady. Am I to do it by the means which kills the ail or by that killing the patient?"

"Are you sure the man would die?" asked the Queen.

"Although," replied the doctor, with a dark air, "he does not for the Queen's good fame, he may through the King's spite. Come on."

Sighing, the Queen followed the doctor, without seeing Andrea. It was at the roomdoor of Count Charny that she discovered her.

"You, here?" she ejaculated, in surprise.

"I," returned the other, turning pale. "Yes, my lady.

"Your Majesty is here, also. I—I heard you were looking for me, and I hastened to where I saw you going."

"What a complication," said the doctor to himself.

"You guessed closely," said the Queen, still in doubt, but she so wanted a confidante that she was inclined to be indulgent.

Scarcely had the Queen disappeared in the sick chamber than her lady of honor turned a glance upward so full of anger and sorrow that it would not have been plain if accompanying a furious imprecation.

The doctor took her arm and walked her up to the corridor a little, saying: "Do you think she will succeed in inducing him to go away, as the only means of healing him?"

"If you believe that, I hope she will," replied Andrea.

On hearing the Queen's slippers, Charny lifted his head and murmuring her title, he strove to rise.

"The Queen," said Marie Antoinette, in haste, "who knows how you are sporting with life and reason, whom you offend by your spoken dreams, and when awake, when she needs her honor intact and your safety. Hence I come to you, but not thus to be received."

He had risen and dropped on his knees, so crushed by mental and bodily pain that he did not wish and had no power to rise.

"Is it possible that a nobleman, once renowned among the most loyal, should persist like an enemy in attacking a woman's reputation?" continued the monarch, touched by the respect and silence. "For note this, Count Charny, from our first interview, it was not the Queen but merely a woman who was placed in your view."

She gave him no time to speak the words coming in his defense.

"What will my enemies do if you set the example of treason?"

"Do not call me a traitor," faltered Charny, "In a royal mouth that accusation precedes a death warrant: in a woman's it precedes one's disgrace. As a Queen, kill me; as a woman, spare.

"Are you in your right mind, are you conscious of your ill behavior towards me and your crime to—the King? For you noblemen easily forget that the monarch is husband of the woman whom you insult by lifting your gaze upon. The King is father of the prince, your future master. The King is a greater and better man than you all, as he is one whom I venerate and love."

"Oh," muttered the wounded one, groaning low as he leaned against the wall.

His complaint pierced the Queen's heart: in his dying glances she read that she had struck him vitally and would be his death unless she plucked forth the string which she had deeper set in the wound.

Sweet and merciful, she felt the pallor and weakness of the guilty lover, and thought for the moment of calling for help.

But she reflected that the doctor, to say nothing of Andrea, might see the state of the patient with misreading eyes.

"Let me speak as a sovereign and you as a man," resumed she. "When will this wound, mere nothing but made bad by your extravagancies of the brain, be healed? When will you cease to give the good doctor the painful sight of your crazy fits? When are you going from this palace?"

"If you drive me away, I go," stammered the count, making so violent an effort to rush forth that he reeled and fell in the Queen's own arms as she barred his passage.

Scarcely had he felt the contact of the burning bosom blocking the way, the involuntary clasp of the arms holding him, than his reason wholly fled him, and his mouth opened to let a breath flit which was not a word and durst not be a kiss.

Scorched by the embrace, the Queen, bending under his feebleness, had no more than time to push the failing body upon a chair and she would have fled but for Charny's head drooping. It struck the back of the chair, and as a pale pink tinge colored the froth on his lips, a warm red drop fell on her hand.

"All for the best; I die killed by you," he muttered.

Forgetting all, the Queen returned, seized him and raised him in her arms, pressed his corpse-like head to her breast and laid a cold hand on his heart. Love worked a miracle—Charny, resuscitated, opened his eyes.

But the vision had fled. The woman was afraid to leave a happy memory where she meant to leave farewell.

"If you are not the meanest of men," she hissed at the door, "you will be out of this house to-morrow, or a dead man!"

When a queen commands in such terms she entreats. Charny, clasping his hands, dragged himself on his knees to the feet of Marie Antoinette, who had opened the door for her flight.

Andrea saw the pair. Smitten to the heart, she did not bend her head, despairing but full of hatred and disdain. She thought that heaven had given too much to the woman, when with a throne and beauty, she enjoyed half an hour with Count Charny.

"What will he do?" inquired the doctor, seeing too many things to distinguish any one.

"He will go," was the Queen's reply.

Without any heed of frowning Andrea, and delightful Louis, she rapidly returned to her rooms.

With a solemn pace as usual, Andrea went to hers; she had not thought of asking the Queen's orders; for such a woman a queen was just a rival.

That evening, four footmen carried Charny to his carriage.

He gave himself the painful mortification of glancing up at the Queen's windows.

They were lighted up as the royal mistress, somewhat indisposed, had retired and had her attendants round her.

In her darkened room, Andrea was looking out, anxious and palpitating, at the escort of Charny's friends around their idol.

"If not mine, he shall be the property of nobody," muttered Andrea.

---

## CHAPTER XXX.

### TWO ACHING HEARTS.

ON the day following that when Andrea had perceived the Queen fleeing from the kneeling Charny, the sister of Philip Taverney found him in their father's residence where he was in reverie. The woman acted while the man meditated.

On seeing her so unexpectedly, the latter started, almost alarmed. The somber aspect of one who ever approached him with an affectionate smile caused him to question her.

She announced that she had handed in her resignation of the royal service, which had been accepted, and that she was going into the Nunnery of St. Denis.

"What," cried the soldier, bringing his hands together with a clap as when one receives an unexpected stroke, "you, too?"

"I, what? what do you mean?"

"Is there a curse in our family coming into contact with the Bourbons?" he demanded. "You, forced to take the veil who are a nun by taste? you, least worldly of woman and least capable of obeying ascetic laws eternally? What do you reproach the Queen for?"

"Nothing, Philip," was the cold reply. "You could not bear the court three days, while I have stood it for three years."

"The Queen has odd fits and starts."

"If that were all, you, a man, could support them: but I,

a woman, ought not and will not. Let her vent her spite on her hirelings."

"This does not show me how you come to fall out with the Queen."

"We have had no difference, I swear to you. Had you, to quit her? Oh, this is an ingrate!"

"She must be forgiven. Flattery has a trifle spoilt her: her heart is good at bottom."

"Witness how she has acted towards you. If you forget it, I have a better memory. So on the same day, I pay your debt and mine, Philip."

"Too dear, meseems, Andrea. The world is not to be turned from at your age and in full bloom. Quitting it young, you will deplore it in your old age, and you will return when it is too late."

"But you too have renounced the world, though you do not enter the monastery. I may make irrevocable vows but you have already pledged yourself to them."

"You are right: but our father——"

"A father ought to be his children's sustainer or accept their support. What does ours do? Have you ever thought to entrust a secret to Baron Taverney? does he ever call you to confide one of his secrets to you? No," she continued with bitter grief, "the Baron is born to dwell alone."

"I grant that, but not to die alone."

"These words reminded the hearer that she had given too large a place in her heart to her own rage, sourness and rancor.

"You know I am a tender sister and I do not want you to take me for a feelingless daughter. But everybody has tried to kill good feelings in me. A man, named Joseph Balsamo the Mesmerist, robbed me of my soul: another, Gilbert, robbed me of honor and of the child which was my offspring. I repeat to you, Philip, that I ought to have had a father. He is naught. Let us look to you, to see how the great ones of society repay service of one who loves them, like you."

"Spare me," returned the Colonel, lowering his head. "The great ones are in my own eyes but as my own · Heaven bids us to love one another; I love them."

"Oh, Philip, never does it happen that the heart that loves another can speak directly with it and have a direct answer. That whom one chooses loves another."

Raising his pale brow, he looked long at his sister, in mere astonishment.

"Why do you say so? what are you aiming at?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Andrea, generously, recoiling before the idea of stooping to reports or confidence. "I have been upset by this departure and my head is not clear. I come to have you escort me to the nunnery, where I do not intend as yet to take the vows. I am not seeking forgetfulness but memory. I have too long forgotten my God. Solitude is the hall into eternal blessedness."

"Mark that I forbid this desperate design. You ought to make me the judge of such despair."

"Philip, if you were going to renounce the world, what would you call the cause of your resolution?"

"Incurable sorrow, sister," answered Taverney.

"Good, I adopt the term."

"Then the lives of brother and sister will still resemble. Happy alike, they will always be miserable to the same degree. A farewell to our father is indispensable. Otherwise he will cry out against your ill behavior and casting him off."

"I will see him at five. At seven, come and take me to the nunnery."

---

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### ILLUSIONS RECOVERED AND A SECRET LOST.

THE Queen was still clouded by the remembrance of Andrea abandoning her when Jeanne of Valois entered her apartment with a smiling face.

"He is here," she announced.

The Queen was astonished by the plain pronoun, but already the wily go-between had ushered in Cardinal Rohan.

Squeezing the hand of him she now patronized, the countess glided stealthily away, leaving the prince within three pa-



ces of the sovereign. He respectfully made her the ceremonial bows.

She was touched by this tactful reserve: she held out her hand to the cardinal who had not yet lifted his eyes to her.

"My lord, a deed of yours has been related to me which effaces any misdeeds," she said.

"Allow me to say that they would have been lessened if your Majesty had let me explain them."

He trembled with unaffected emotion.

"I do not restrict you from defending yourself," returned Marie Antoinette with dignity; "but you must not tell me what would cast a shadow on the love and respect I have for my husband and country. You cannot exculpate yourself without wounding me, my lord cardinal. There, do not fan the ashes in which may still smoulder some fire to scorch your fingers or mine. Better to see you in the clear daylight as you freshly appear to me, obliging, respectful, and devoted——"

"To death," interrupted the prelate.

"That is proper speaking. But," she went on, smiling, "so far it is only to ruin. Very handsome of you. But I expect to prevent that. You will live and you will not be ruined, unless you ruin yourself—as people say you will!"

"I would become a miser, to please your Majesty."

"Nay, the King likes misers no more than spendthrifts."

"I will become anything your Majesty likes," interrupted the cardinal, with poorly veiled possession.

"I was saying," said the Queen, roughly cutting him short; "that you will not be ruined through me. You have answered for me, I know, but I am going to honor my engagements; beyond the first payment I will attend to the rest."

"It will close the business, then, to offer the necklace to your Majesty."

At the same time he drew out a jewel case, opened it and presented the glittering ornament.

Her not looking at it betrayed the vehement yearning to look.

Trembling with joy, she placed it on a sideboard, under her hand. As though she had made a vow not to look at the

diamonds while he was there, she listened to him with absence of mind while he expressed his gratitude over their reconciliation. By distraction also she let him take her hand which he kissed with a ravished air. Then he took leave, thinking he was a burden to her, which overwhelmed him with joy. A friend does not fetter one; an indifferent person even less.

So closed this interview, which healed all the wounds in the cardinal's heart. He returned to Paris, after briefly and hurriedly thanking Jeanne, in an atmosphere of celestial felicity.

In two hours life changed its face. If he were merely loving, the Queen had given him more food for thought in that direction than he had hoped: if she were only ambitious, she made him hope still more.

Skillfully led by his nose by his wife, the King would be instrument of a fortune not to be stopped by anything.

Prince Louis planned to rally the clergy with the people to form one of those solid majorities governing by strength and craft.

One kind word of Marie Antoinette had changed his dream into reality; his dream of making her unpopularity the very contrary by putting her at the head of the reform movement.

The lady-killer would give up his easy triumphs, the worldly churchman would become a philosopher, and the idler an indefatigable toiler. Rohan would go far, drawn by the brilliant team known as Love and Ambition.

He set to work as soon as in his study, burning a pile of love letters, talking reformation with his steward, bidding his secretary rough-draft memoirs on the English Policy which he wonderfully understood. After an hour at home he had cooled down when a visitor was announced as a person who had given notice of a call in the morning. Now he gave his name as Count Cagliostro.

"Who is it I behold?" faltered Rohan as soon as the two were alone together.

"Am I so changed, my lord?" said the count with a smile.

"Is it possible—can you be Joseph Balsamo, who was said to have been burnt to death in the conflagration of his house?"

"I am that same Count Fenix, living indeed, and more lively than ever."

"But under what title do you present yourself and why drop the old one?"

"Merely because it is old, and reminded myself and others of sad and annoying matters. I am not speaking of your highness. Would you have denied your door to Joseph Balsamo?"

"Oh, no, no."

Still stupefied, he did not offer a seat to his visitor.

"Because your Eminence has more probity and better memory than all men together."

"My lord, you once did me a great service."

"Do you notice," interrupted Balsamo, "that I have not altered with time and that I am a fine sample of the goodness of my elixir of life?"

"I confess that you are above the rest of mankind, you who lavish gold and health."

"I say nothing about health, my lord, but not gold any longer. Alas, I have lost the last particle of an ingredient in the mixture to make gold by the death of my master the Sage Althotas, who has carried away the secret."

"He is dead?"

"I have lost him. That fire in my house to which you alluded, was his death, welcome, for he wanted to go, as I have a hundred times wished myself. But I chose better than he, who liked to be old and my body of forty years lusts for life, spite of all disappointments."

"Oh, how you astonish me again," said the cardinal. "You restore me to the time when the magic of your words, with the marvels of your operations doubled my faculties and enhanced the value of all I beheld. You remind me of the two dreams of my youth. It is ten years since you appeared to me."

"I know : we have both been abased since then : and while I am a mere wiseacre not a wizard, your highness is a great prince, who may aspire more than then to the love of the woman with the golden locks."

The cardinal turned pale and red. Joy and terror played at stopping the throbs of his heart.

"She, too, lives but she has not aged to disadvantage. You ought to know that for you have just come from the house where she is treasured."

"My lord," faltered the cardinal, laying his frozen hand on his heart, and in so low a voice that Cagliostro hardly heard him. "For mercy's sake——"

"Suppose we talk of another matter, my lord," said the count, courteously. "I am quite at your disposal. Do what you like with me."

He reclined rather loungingly on a sofa, which the host had forgotten to point out to him.

---

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

THE prince looked at his free-and-easy visitor with a stunned air.

"Let us converse, yes," he stammered; "I suppose the hint of business in your anonymous note of this morning was unintended?"

"Not in the least. It is a most seriously real matter, I assure you."

And he held out to the prince a peculiar kind of paper, which was still folded.

"My acknowledgment of the gold which Balsamo lent me," he exclaimed in dismay.

"Ay, but you perhaps thought that it had been consumed with him in the fire at his house? luckily the paper, as you see, is made of asbestos, and is indestructible like Balsamo himself," returned the magician gravely.

His slight smile was tempered by a cold bow.

"My lord," said the cardinal with some haughtiness, "believe that I should not have denied my debt even if it existed on word of honor alone; so you were wrong to let me think the matter would not come up. How could you let the amount lie dormant for ten years?"

"I knew how solidly it was invested, my lord. Events, card play, thieves, these have successively despoiled me of my property; but I was patient over this sum, in such security, and I waited till the latest moment, now come, when I can wait no longer."

"Hence you are asking for your money, now?"

"This day, please your highness."

"My lord," replied the cardinal, in a broken voice after a silence, quivering with despair, "the unfortunate princes of earth do not improvise fortunes as rapidly as you magicians who are princes of the air."

"Oh, my lord," said Cagliostro Balsamo, "believe me that I should not have asked you for the sum if I were not aware that you had five hundred thousand livres here, thirty in gold, ten in silver and the rest drafts on the treasury, in yonder Boule cabinet."

The prelate blanched.

"And I know what sacrifices your highness had to make to get it together; but then I have been twenty times on the point of death, by starvation or disappointment beside this paper, though I waited. I think we are even."

"Do not say that. You have the advantage of having lent me such a sum; I shall eternally remain your debtor. Only, had you spoken, I might have paid you twenty times. But to-day, I do not conceal it, this restitution, which you exact, horribly vexes me."

Cagliostro shrugged his shoulders to imply that this did not concern him.

"But as you divine everything, you ought to know for what end that money is prepared—what holy and mysterious mission?"

"Your highness is mistaken," coldly replied the count, "my own secrets have brought me so much grief, disappointment and losses, that I am not worrying myself about others. As long as I know you have the cash, its intended expenditure does not interest me."

"True," said the cardinal, his pride and touchiness affected, "you ought to have your money. Still there was no fixed time for the settlement."

"You are mistaken again," for I see it written;" and he read :

"I acknowledge receiving from Joseph Balsamo the sum of 500,000 livres, payable on his first demand.

" "LOUIS DE ROHAN."

The cardinal shuddered in every limb, for he had forgotten the tenor of the note as well as the note itself. Struck to the heart, as Cagliostro, after a second's relenting, still held out the demand-note, he reeled to the cabinet and drew out drafts on the Landed Estates Fund: he opened a drawer and pointed to bags of coin.

"Here is the cash," he said; "still I owe the interest and even though you do not claim it compound, it is a considerable sum. I will let my steward arrange that with you and I beg a little time."

"My lord, I lent the Prince of Rohan a certain sum, in a critical hour; Lord Rohan owes me that sum, nothing else. If I had wanted interest, I should have stipulated so in my bond. Agent or heir to Joseph Balsamo, for he is as the dead, I want nothing but what the call expresses. You pay me, I accept with thanks, and my respectful reverence. I will take the notes with me and, as I have pressing need of the coin, I will send for it this day."

The cardinal finding no objections, he pocketed the notes, respectfully saluted the prince in whose hands he left the note, and went out.

"Well, the misfortune falls on me alone," groaned Rohan, "for Prime Minister Calonne never refuses the Queen any money and I understand that she is secure about her money. At least no unexpected Balsamo will pounce upon her to claim five hundred thousand livres."

Indeed, almost while he was speaking, a messenger had left with Marie Antoinette a note from Premier Calonne, always suppliant to the crown and the nobles, thus conceived:

"This evening the matter which your Majesty deigned to charge me with, will be signed at the Council of State and to-morrow morning your Majesty will have the funds."

But the King was not in a good humor at the Council of the Cabinet. That could be told by the kind of drawings he traced with the pen while listening to the minister's debate. When in good humor, he drew horses and grotesque men: but now he scrawled cross-hatches, or lines upon each other—token of "bad weather."

When he came in the list of outlay to an item of 500,000 livres to the Queen, he frowned.

"This must be some error," he remonstrated, "for the Queen had her quarter's money. She cannot want this. She said that a ship-of-war was preferable to a diamond necklace. She thinks that if France has to raise a loan to help her poor, we rich ones should lend to France. Therefore, if the Queen needs this money, the more great it will be for her to wait. I warrant that she shall wait."

And he struck out the line.

Calonne knew how much the Queen wanted the money but while he bit his lips, Louis, delighted with this self-sacrifice, imposed on his consort, signed all the rest with blind faith.

Hence the next note from Calonne to the Queen ran

Your Majesty will hear that his Majesty the King has refused the credit. This is incomprehensible and I came away from the Council sick at heart with grief."

Count Artois was with the Queen as she read this. She handed him the paper, saying: "Read."

"And yet, people say that we are squandering the finances," exclaimed the prince. "This is a slap from——"

"A husband," said Marie Antoinette. "Good-bye, brother."

"Receive my condolence; it is a warning to me for I was going to sue for some money."

"Send and bring me Lady Lamotte," said the Queen to Lady Misery, after long meditation. "Wherever she is, bring her at once!"

---

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE QUEEN AND THE WOMAN.

ON the call from the Queen, Jeanne Lamotte Valois understood the urgency of the case. She made such haste that she was in Versailles from Paris in an hour.

The Queen was alone in her room, with Lady Misery in the outer sitting-room. Marie Antoinette affected to be embroidering, but she was uneasily listening for sounds without when the summoned one rushed in.

"You are here—I am glad," said the waiting one; "I have a piece of news."

"Good?"

"Judge for yourself. The King has cancelled the five hundred thousand livres Calonne requested. He is no longer giving any money. Such things happen only to me. But let us not dwell on it. You must hasten back to town and tell the cardinal who has put so much devotion at my disposition, that I will accept his five hundred thousand livres until my next quarter's money comes in. This is selfish of me, countess, but I must do it, and abuse his kindness."

"We are lost," gasped Jeanne, "the cardinal has no money. A creditor whom he did not expect, came upon him and being a debt of honor he paid away five hundred thousand. His last crown, he has no more means."

The Queen was stunned by the misfortune.

"Am I awake? can such things befall me in a heap? How do you know that Prince Rohan wants money?"

"Only an hour or so ago, he told me of the disaster. It was what they call his bottom gold-piece."

"Something must be done," muttered the Queen. "This is a dreadful lesson to me not to keep any little thing hidden from the King. After all I did not so much need this necklace."

"True, but a Queen would have nothing if she consulted only her needs——"



"I ought to have looked first to the comfort and happiness of my home. The first check is ample to show me to what annoyances I am exposed and how abundant with disgrace is the road I chose. I should go freely, simply and openly. To commence, as the poet Dorat says, 'sacrifice vanity on the altar of duty.'"

She sighed :

"The necklace is very, very handsome, though."

"It is as good as gold."

"But only a string of pebbles to me now. I think it had better be taken to the jewelers, and returned to them."

"But your Majesty has paid on account. Lose a quarter-million thus !" ejaculated the countess. "For those jewelers will make all difficulties about returning any money."

"I will give it up if I get clear. I feel lighter at this way out. With the necklace came care, sorrows, fears and suspicion. Never will the stones throw out fire enough to dry up the tears they cause. Countess, take away the necklace at once. The merchants will do very well as it is. My forfeit is a pretty penny, and they will still have the jewels. I think they will not complain and no one else will know anything about it. The cardinal acted merely to give me pleasure, and you will tell me that I found none in the necklace. He is so bright as to understand me ; as a good priest he will approve and confirm me in the sacrifice."

By an imperious movement the Queen swept the case into the hands of her envoy who did not feel the weight without marked emotion.

To throw the police off the scent, as they probably spied all who had interviews in private with the Queen, she was driven to her own house ; thence she went to Rohan's not to let the coachman, lent her with the carriage by the prince, know what was afoot.

Then going home, she dressed herself quietly for the evening call. She mused over a strange idea inspired by the occurrence.

She wondered whether the cardinal would not be committing a great blunder in letting the Queen return the diamond ornament and whether she, his confederate, would not become

less necessary to the pair if she ceased to share in the petty royal secrets? But to act on the Queen's orders without conferring with Rohan was to sin against the first rules of the partnership. Though at the end of his resources would not the cardinal sell himself to the Prince of Darkness rather than let the Queen be deprived of an object which she coveted.

"I must consult him," she reasoned: "but he will never make up so much money. What a sum this jewel represents! what a radiant and happy life and what lustre is represented by this little shining serpent flaring in its satin nest."

She opened the case and seared her eyes with the stream of flame. She took out the collar, rolled it round her fingers and shut it up in her hands, saying:

"This is worth some fourteen hundred thousand livres solid cash, and jewelers would pay that for it at any moment."

Strange destiny of little Jeanne of Valois, the street beggar, to touch the hand of the foremost Queen of Christendom, and to hold in her own grasp—if only for an hour—a sum which rarely is in a mass except when escorted by guards and guarantees such as a queen or a peer of the kingdom can surround it with.

"All this in my ten fingers—how heavy and yet how light it is! I should want a span of horses to carry it away in gold equivalent; and in bank bills—but they have to be signed and certified; and being paper they are easily lost, burnt, worn out. Besides Treasury notes and Exchequer bills are not current in all countries, and they tell their tale: in time they are impaired in value; while diamonds are unalterable and are valued and admired from London to Madrid, and in Brazil itself. How lovely they are—how brilliant! What beauty individually and as they are artfully arranged. In proportion, each is as valuable as in the collected form."

"But they will go back to the cold safe of the jeweler who will make a noise over the return but console himself when he sees the forfeit he has got. Let me see: in what form must his receipt be made out? that is a delicate deed and it must not entangle any of us, myself, the Queen, Rohan or the tradesman."

She sat on the sofa, with the diamond necklace twined in

her hand, her burning brain full of confused thoughts, frightened and repulsing the ideas which she had welcomed.

Suddenly her eyes cleared: it became fixed on a steady fancy. An hour passed in her contemplation of the object in vacancy. After which she rose slowly, pallid as an inspired priestess, and went forth by herself in a hack.

In ten minutes she stopped at the door of Reteau the pamphlet writer whom Charny and Taverny had whipped and who had no love while still his wells smarted, for the Queen and her champions.

The result of this night call on the writer, who was skillful in calligraphy at least, was to be seen by informed vision, in Lady Lamotte sending to her patroness the following receipt.

“ We, the undersigned, acknowledge the return of the diamond necklace sold to H. M. the Queen for 1,600,000 livres, the said jewels not suiting H. M., who acquits us of our expenses and as indemnity by leaving to us a sum of 200,000 livres, paid in advance. BOEHMER AND BOSSANGE.”

Tranquil on this score, the Queen locked up the document in her desk and thought no more about it.

But, strangely in contradiction, two days subsequently, the court jewelers received a visit from Cardinal Rohan who was naturally uneasy about how the first payment was met by the Queen.

It had not been made !

“ But,” said Boehmer, “ her Majesty is most willing, and as she guarantees the debt, we ask no more.”

“ Glad to hear it,” said the prince. “ But how guaranteed ? by the intermediation of Countess Lamotte ?”

“ No, my lord, the countess has had nothing to do with the transaction, which much flattered my partner and myself. You see, hearing that the King had refused some special money to the Queen, we wrote to Lady Lamotte, saying that we would like an audience with the Queen. The answer was that we had better wait a little: and sure enough we had a secret messenger from the Queen in the evening bearing a letter, I mean a document in regular shape.”

"You are lucky to have letters of the sovereign, gentlemen."

"For such a sum one may have letters from the Pope—" began the merchant, laughing.

"Millions would not buy that autograph," rebuked the prelate. "However, you are guaranteed?"

"The Queen acknowledges the debt, and says: "Let this matter be kept to ourselves: you will never repent it. Then follows her signature. Your highness will see that this is a matter of honor for my partner and myself."

"Then I am out of it, Boehmer," said the cardinal, delighted. "Let us soon do other business."

And he went forth to his carriage, escorted by the whole establishment in respect.

Let us lift the mask.

When Jeanne of Valois borrowed the pen of Reteau, her deed against her benefactress may be guessed. With a forgery, no more uneasiness at the jewelers', no scruples at the Queen's, no doubt at the cardinal's.

Three months were gained for the fruit of the crime to ripen in the plotter's hands.

Having hoodwinked the prince, Jeanne had resolved to sell a few of the diamonds and run away to Russia or England, where she would live richly until she could realize another portion of the spoil, and so continue.

But all did not succeed, according to her calculations.

A diamond merchant is an Argus! his surprise and caution at seeing the stones frightened the seller. One offered derisive sums; the other went into ecstasies over the gems and said he had never beheld the like—except at Boehmer's, in his necklace.

Jeanne stopped. In another step she would have betrayed herself. Imprudence would be ruin, the pillory and perpetual imprisonment. Locking up the diamonds she resolved to furnish herself with such strong weapons that she could beat off attack in case of war.

She did not falter. Her character was one of those so intrepid as to carry evil into heroism or goodness into ill.

Her only thought was to keep the cardinal from meeting the Queen.

Nothing was lost so long as Jeanne stood between them ; if they exchanged a word behind her back, it would ruin her future fortune, built on the past doing her no harm.

"They shall never see one another," she vowed. "If he tries to procure an interview he will compromise himself. Ay, but will he ensnare himself alone?"

This thought threw her into painful perplexity. If he alone were entangled the Queen might save him ; and then her strong hand would tear the mask from before the plotter. To prevent the Queen accusing her she must stop the royal mouth, and that noble and daring mouth could only be barred by the fear of some dread accusation.

Nobody accuses his servant of theft when the servant can denounce his employer of some worse crime. If Rohan were besmirched in relations with the Queen, the latter would be stained by her relations with him.

Jeanne at first recoiled from under the rock hanging over her head ; what a life, under such an impending fall, panting and frightened.

She might flee ; but what shame and scandal ! though free she would have to hide ; she might be in safety but she would be an outlaw. Instead of a woman of quality she would be a thief, whom justice might not seek but she would be pointed out—too far for the executioner's iron to brand her, but not for public opinion to sear and blacken.

No, she would not run away.

The apex of boldness and of skill resemble the twin peaks of Mount Atlas ; one is like the other and they can be stepped upon from either.

She resolved to brazen it out and stay.

All she wanted was some weapon against Rohan and the Queen : some proof of their guilt, a charge that would make the Queen turn pale and the priest-prince redden, but would accredit Jeanne as the confidential holder of the double secret.

She rose from the cushion as if she had already found softer ones to break her fall, and went to the window, where

the sunshine blazed, and looked out for some solution in the skies for the problem.

Lower than that she found it.

She uttered a deep hoarse cry.

"The Queen over there?"

Then clasping her hands and frowning, while she dared not move lest she broke the spell, she stared at the face which had appeared at a window opposite, and muttered :

"The living likeness of Marie Antoinette, whom I saw at Mesmer's and the Opera! I have the means to win."

---

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE TWO OPPOSITE NEIGHBORS.

NIGHT was falling when Count Cagliostro went alone to the deserted house of Balsamo in St. Claude Street where he stopped at the carriage entrance. He took the large key from under his overcoat and cleared the keyhole of dust, dirt and cobwebs before he could insert it.

To the flies crept in for refuge during ten years, all was ground to atoms as the bronze made the turn and at last the gates were opened.

The courtyard appeared, desolate and weedgrown as a graveyard, to Cagliostro's sight.

He shut the gates behind him and trampled on the dandelions which had begun to cover the pavement stones themselves.

He stopped to reflect that his life was void and desolate as this house was ruined and deserted.

The steps trembled under his tread, and with a second key he penetrated the mansion.

In the ante-room he lit a lantern with which he had provided himself. But carefully as he lighted it, the bad air extinguished the flame first time. The breath of death reigned here and gloom fought against light.

Relighting, he continued his way to the rooms where he

had been so happy with his wife Lorenza, the medium of the spiritualist, his hope and his joy, till the Sage Althotas had murdered her to obtain blood for his elixir.

A sound on the secret stairs down which she had come at his bidding in his deceptions, made him start.

But the sound of gliding steps ceased as he touched the spring impelling the secret panel.

He opened the door and peered in : a bloated adder was slowly sliding down the steps and slapping each stair with its tail. It quickly fixed its black eye on the intruder, slipped into the first knothole in the wainscoting and disappeared : it was the Genius of Solitude.

The count went up into the room where he had kept Lorenza a captive ; the walls were bare, the floor clear, while in the fireplace a large heap of ashes was piled. Something gleamed in the grey : it was a gold hairpin of the beautiful Italian woman.

He picked it up, though the philosopher, the wizard, the prophet and scorner of humanity, he who sought to reckon with heaven, the man who had crushed so many sorrows within his breast and tried to visit on others so much more—Cagliostro the Charlatan, the sceptical mocker—he kissed the relic and while a tear came to his eye, he muttered :

“Poor Lorenza !”

That was all—the devil reigned again in his heart.

He flung the frail trinket through the window, punishing himself for having allowed emotion.

“Farewell !” he said, “the memory sent to soften me ! but henceforth I will think of worldly things alone.”

And yet was he to let another profane this house where his beloved had roamed, another woman sing where Lorenza’s last sigh had breathed ?”

All this inner house which had been love’s shrine, should be removed so that the mystery would vanish and the house would cease to be a sanctuary.

He wrote on his tablets these words :

“CHEVALIER LENOIR, Architect : Clear the court and approaches ; restore the stables and offices ; demolish the.

inner pavilion ; reduce the mansion to two stories ; and be done in one week."

He went to a window at the back.

Sixty feet above him, he saw the rear windows of the rooms occupied by Countess Lamotte.

"The two women will not fail to catch sight of each other," he said. "That is well. The light woman shall live here, but the profanation will be in my cause. What heaven loses the other side will gain."

Next day an army of "house-breakers" were invading the premises where the pick and sledge made music, and a fat rat might be seen dangling by one paw to a string in the yard, among the masons and bricklayers laughing at his grey whiskers and aldermanic belly.

The neighbors passed this epitaph on the rodent :

"For ten years he was happy here,—So passes the glory of this world !"

In a week the house was renovated as Cagliostro had ordered, and Oliva was installed there.

But though in the morning she played the fine lady, in the midst of refined and intelligent luxury, the little intoxicated creature only lived during the hour when Cagliostro called twice a-week to tell her the news and learn how she supported this life.

The poor upstart had confessed to herself that all her past career was a deception and error, for the moralist is not right in saying that virtue makes one good ; goodness makes one happy.

Oliva was blessed, but she was in tedium. Many times she longed to be back in Dauphin Street, ogling the passers out of her window or strolling in the street on high-heeled slippers to set off her instep with each pace a triumph.

It is true that imprisoned Nicole thought of the police and that the asylum for Magdalens which awaited her at the end of her run, was not to be compared with the splendid house where she was in safety.

But the day came when she sighed for Beausire as well as for her liberty.

Having exhausted all amusements in her reach, not daring



to show herself at the windows, she began to fall off in appetite but her imagination thirsted more than ever.

It was at this time of moral fretfulness that she received an unexpected visit from Cagliostro.

Quick as a bird seeing the cagedoor left unfastened, she flew to meet her noble jailer, to caress him but to say in a hoarse, sharp voice :

"Let me tell you that time hangs heavy !"

"What a pity," he said, closing the door. "But do not be vexed with me if you are not comfortable here, for you ought to bestow all your vexation on the Chief of Police, your enemy, and Captain Beausire's."

"Beausire's enemy?"

"More than ever, for he has been guilty of robbery."

"Oh, my lord, do you mean that he has been arrested?"

"No : but the warrant is out for him. Do you remember my warning him at the Opera that his associates contemplated to divide the plunder of the gang without letting him have his share ? he hastened to prevent the thieves robbing the thief, when he was in time to be still their partner in a scheme. Daring beyond mere sharpers, they plotted to pass one of their number off as the Portuguese Ambassador; the estimable Beausire, who had a smattering of Portuguese from his residence there with you, as his secretary, while the remainder of the band took up positions of minor note in the Embassy. They ruled the roast for a time, induced the court jewelers to think they would buy the diamond necklace passing into history, from mere gossip, as desired by the Queen ; and all but laid hands on it when some mishap balked their aims. The bold gamblers were thrown into consternation by which the ingenious Beausire profited by cleaning out the safe of the Embassy and taking to flight with the cash. He thus repaid his associates for having tried to rob him, by despoiling them. So you see that the police are on the track of Captain Beausire ; and they will not be particular if they catch him by means of having you. Where the bee sips—that is, they will think that you having money—I should say, honey, the worthy captain will buzz around you."

"Oh, poor boy, he must hide! As I must do. Do get him

out of France, my lord. And help me to quit as well. Try to do me this service as some day I will not be able to resist the imprudence of going out for a little air."

"Oh, go if you like. I want you to have full confidence in me. Use my house, my purse, my credit, and——"

"I will say that some men are in this world greatly superior to those I heretofore have met," said Oliva, with a charm and dignity making an impression on the soul of bronze.

"All women are good when the right chord is touched," he thought.

"From this evening," he said, "you shall live in the upper floor. The windows at the back give a view of Belleville and Menilmontant, where few can see you. Our neighbors are quiet folk whom you need not fear. So have a look out, but do not show yourself to the people in the street as the police spies may be among them."

Oliva clapped her hands joyfully, but the next instant she was puzzled again, for the elegant jailer left the room.

"I cannot make out what is going on," she mused as she was left alone.

She went to rest in the change of rooms, admiring the count so incomprehensible to her, pitying Beausire and troubled in her sleep like the heroine of a melodramatic novel sleeping in the Black Turret.

With the dawn fled her terrors, and she was hardly up before she trotted about to go into raptures over the delights of her new retreat.

When these had palled, and the afternoon was passing, she leaned on her elbow at the window and gazed out on the landscape of the environs of Paris. The scene tiring her, bred and born in the country, sure that her position among the potted plants on the window-sill allowed her to see without being seen, she lowered her view from the far-off hills to the neighboring houses.

In her scope, some three buildings, all the windows were closed or far from inviting. Here three floors were inhabited by old women living on their incomes, whose birds hung in cages or their cats sunned themselves within; in another the house-keeper was the only tenant visible; the lodgers were absent.

But a little on her left, in the third house, yellow silk curtains, flowers and an easy chair by the casement told of a more promising dweller.

Soon this chair was occupied. The lodger had come home and she sat in meditation while the hairdresser worked to build one of those Babylonian structures which were a veritable Noah's Ark to the wearer.

Oliva remarked how pretty the stranger was and admired her.

She could not detach her eyes from her.

There is moral purity in this attraction of woman for woman.

Though left alone the lady still continued to brood, or perhaps because she was alone.

Oliva imagined for her some such romance as she was figuring in, and expected to see the gallant for whom she had been making herself so fine.

But Countess Lamotte, seeking the way out of her plight, was preoccupied for two mortal hours.

Weary of this inattention, Nicole opened and shut the window a dozen times; frightened the sparrows in the trees, and made gestures so startling that Crosne's watchers could not fail to perceive them had they been in sight.

At length, in shifting the flowers on her sill, the girl knocked over a pot of white flowers which went crashing into the backyard. As she looked out to see what damage she had done, the other also darted a glance outward at the sound.

As we know, she saw Oliva.

But at the moment that Jeanne thought it was the Queen, Oliva heard a step behind her and, turning, beheld Cagliostro.

"They have seen each other," he thought, as the woman abruptly came away from the window.

From that period the two women corresponded with glances, smiles and gestures.

A few days afterwards, Cagliostro complained to Oliva of a visitor to his house.

"A lady has called who tried to bribe the servants into giving her information about the pretty girl seen up at the window of this house. Have a care, for the police have lady spies and I warn you that I cannot refuse to give you up if Chief of Police Crosne demands you."

Instead of being frightened, Oliva recognized that her new acquaintance was trying to improve the intimacy and she was grateful.

“ You do not tremble ? ”

“ Nobody could have seen me,” was the reply. “ If anybody did, it shall not happen again and it will be only from a distance, as the house is impenetrable.”

“ That is the word for it. It would not be easy to scale the back garden wall ; and the only door in it is the little one to which I here give you the key that you may be sure nobody will play tricks with it.”

Later on in the day, after the two women had blown kisses to each other, Jeanne tried to blow something more substantial. She had supplied herself with one of those toy cross-bows by which a bullet is impelled through a tube. To the bullet, which she shot into Oliva's room, was appended a note which began the closer correspondence of the pair.

Thus they could arrange to meet in the garden after dark on each side of the wall.

Oliva told her story without reservations: all about Beausire and the police hunting them. Jeanne gave herself out as a lady of good family who had eloped with a lover without the knowledge of her family.

A week of these nocturnal escapades made their meeting a necessity and a habit, still more a pleasure. By that time Jeanne's name was more often on Oliva's lips than Beausire's had been.

---

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE QUEEN'S HAND.

CHARNY remained three days in the country in seclusion ; but then, trusting the residence to a servant, he went back to Versailles. He hired the house in the park of a game inspector, where he established himself at the window, overgrown with vegetation, in love with the solitude.

Was it love of the scenery, though ? We shall see.

Here he commenced a life such as will thrill any one who has loved, or heard of love on this earth.

In a fortnight he had learnt all about the habits of the staff of the palace and the grounds so that he could rove about seeing them without coming into their sight.

Above all he had remarked a small postern twenty-five yards from his house, only opened on the great hunt days to carry the baskets of game out of the park.

It was striking midnight at the village churches, but he was at his window, late as it was, when he heard a key creak in this lock.

The pair who entered through it were women, cloaked and cowed and lowering their heads as they hastened their pace.

Confusedly he spied them in the shadow, but the rustle of skirts and silk mantles would have betrayed the sex.

On turning into the main walk facing Charny's window, a moonbeam enwrapped them, and George nearly uttered a cry of surprise and delight as he recognized the lower part of Marie Antoinette's face. She held a lovely rose in her hand.

Though his heart palpitated, Charny dropped from his window into the royal park. He kept on the grass to make no noise and hid himself by the thickest trees while he looked after the pair, whose gait slackened each minute.

What had he to do with them? the Queen had a lady companion and ran no danger on her own ground. Oh, had she been alone, he would brave torture and rush up to her to say that he loved her. Oh, that she were threatened by some great peril that he might throw down his life to save hers, more precious!

As he was thinking this, and a thousand tender things to say, the two promenaders suddenly stopped: the lesser in stature whispered a few words and left her companion.

Thus the Queen stood alone; the other hastened towards some point which Charny did not yet divine. Fidgeting with her small foot on the gravel, the lady leant her back against a tree, and wrapped herself in her mantlet so as to cover even her head with the hood of which fell broad silky folds on her shoulders.

When the lover thus beheld her, he started as if to leap to the front.

But he reflected that before he crossed the thirty paces between them, she would see him and, not recognizing him in the dark, take fright and call out. These cries would attract her companion and the park-keepers or guards. The grounds would be searched and the intruder found; his retreat would be discovered at all events, and all would be over with his secret of love and anticipatory happiness.

So he paused, and he did well, for the Queen's companion reappeared, and not alone.

A couple of steps behind her a tall man followed, under a broad hat and in a voluminous cloak.

At sight, Charny quivered with hate and jealousy. He did not advance like a triumphant lover. Reeling, dragging his feet, he seemed to grope in the darkness as if his only guide were the other lady, with the mark the Queen, white and motionless, at the tree.

As soon as he perceived her, the trembling augmented. He plucked off his hat and swept the ground in bowing with it. Continuing to advance, Charny saw him plunge into the shade where he kept on lowly saluting.

Charny's surprise changed to stupor and then to a more painful emotion. What business had the Queen at the midnight hour in this remote nook? what wanted this fellow here? Why had he been lurking and why was he hiding? Why did the Queen send to bring him out and not go to him?

Then he remembered that political conspiracies were afoot and this might be the secret messenger from foreign courts; with one of those German faces not liked by Louis XVI., since Emperor Joseph had opened his battery of philosophy and political criticism on his Most Christian brother-King.

Like the ice-bag applied by a doctor to the sick man's spine, this idea refreshed Charny, restored him his wits, and calmed his first rage. Besides, the Queen had preserved a bearing full of dignity and decency.

Standing off a few steps, the companion watched uneasily and attentively, like one of the lady-friends or duennas in the square parties of Watteau's pictures, upsetting by her com-

plaisant anxiety the chaste supposition of the naval officer. But yet it is as dangerous to be surprised in a love-plot as in a political one : a gallant and a conspirator closely resemble as both wear a mantle, and have the same sharpness of ear and uncertainty in the legs.

The watcher made a start and broke off the parley ; the cavalier began to bow as though the interview were over. He was going to be dismissed.

Charny hid behind the large tree. He expected the three to pass him in single file. To hold his breath and pray the wood demons to suppress the echoes, was all he could do.

At this he believed he saw a light-colored object glide along the royal mantle : the gentleman stooped smartly to rise with a respectful movement, and flee, with no words to paint the rapidity of his disappearance. But the companion called out after him : "Wait !" and he stopped and waited, being a most obliging gallant.

The two passed Charny, hand in hand, within two steps : the air displaced by the Queen waved the grass blades up to his very feet.

He smelt the Queen's favorite perfumes, verbena and mignonette : a double intoxication for his mind and his senses.

A few minutes after, the stranger came forth, kissing a fresh and balmy rose, with mad passion, certainly the same which Charny had remarked the beauty of when carried by the Queen to this appointment. He had seen it drop from her hands.

A rose—a kiss upon it ? do ambassadors act thus, with plain secrets of state ?

Losing his reason, the spy was going to rush out upon this man and tear the flower from him, when the Queen's companion reappeared and called out :

"Please your highness, come."

Charny thought it was a prince of the royal blood, and he leant against the tree to prevent falling to the sward. The stranger glanced whither the voice came and darted off with her.

So, Providence had brought the nava officer to Versailles and given him a hiding-place to serve his jealousy and put

him on the track of a crime committed by the Queen in scorn of all conjugal probity, royal dignity and even faithfulness of love.

Beyond doubt, this man in the park was a paramour.

How he passed the day in tribulation none can say. When dusk came he ardently watched at the window amid wild thoughts and sombre desires.

In the distance he saw the Queen escorted by torch-bearers into the palace, and he thought she was pensive, unsteady, shaken by her night's adventure.

Gradually all the lights went out; the park sank into its full silence and murkiness. Charny waited for the hour of rendezvous—midnight struck.

His heart nearly burst in his bosom. But nothing disturbed the silence. He thought that this secret adventure might not be repeated without a break. Nothing was obligatory in this amour, and the pair would be rash to try to make a habit of such daring meetings.

"It is incontestable that the Queen will not reiterate her folly," he reasoned.

The doorbolt grated, and the little door opened.

George perceived the two ladies attired as on the previous night.

"She must be fascinated by him," he muttered, turning deadly pale.

As before, he lowered himself out of the window and followed them. This time, while the Queen lonely waited, and her companion went off for the gentleman called "Highness," Charny wondered where this one was hiding. He remembered the Baths of Apollo, a hall sheltered by its marble pilasters and thick groves. But how could the stranger get in? He then remembered that it had an outer door beyond the grounds, to which the stranger might carry a key.

All was thus settled; the Highness departed by this way.

In a few minutes, Charny saw the cavalier. He did not approach with the same respect, but almost ran: certainly, he strode.

Backed by the tree, the Queen stood on the mantle which her new Raleigh spread for her and while the vigilant com-



panion kept watch as before, the amorous nobleman, kneeling on the moss, commenced talking with great rapidity.

The Queen drooped her head, in loving melancholy. She did not answer the speech which seemed impregnated with love and poetry.

Suddenly the hearer uttered a few words; subdued, but the beau heard them; in the excess of his delight, he exclaimed:

"Thanks, oh, thanks, my gentle Majesty! be it to-morrow, then!"

The Queen entirely hid her countenance, partly hooded before.

The stranger saw her hands, out of cover to do this, and seizing them, he pressed on them a kiss so long and tender that Charny knew while it lasted all the torments the fiends pour in ages upon the damned souls.

The kiss received, the Queen rose fleetly and fled with her watch-dog.

As the gallant fled in the other direction, Charny heard the simultaneous sounds of two doors shutting.

We do not try to paint Charny's misery in the hours following this horrible discovery.

In the day, he traced the steps of the lord and found they led to Apollo's Baths. Climbing on the walls without he saw where a horse had trampled and eaten the grass.

"He comes from Paris," reasoned Charny, recalling that he wore a sword; "but I doubt he will go there this night. To-morrow will be my last day, unless I never loved and I am a dastard."

The thought of revenge calmed him—he was going to be the revenger of his King as well.

Casting a last glance round him after dark, he noticed that a light shone in the perfidious Queen's rooms. It was a lie, a stain in addition.

"To make it be believed that she is indoors when she is strolling the park with her wooer. She rates chastity too high," sneered Charny. "She is too good, to cloak her infamy. Yet she may fear to vex her—husband."

He climbed on the balcony of his house, muttering:

"They said, to-morrow. There will be four at the trysting-place, my lady."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## THE WOMAN AND THE QUEEN.

THE next day brought the same line of events. But instead of the Queen remaining at the tree, the two ladies proceeded towards Apollo's Baths.

Smiling and whispering, the Queen walked to the shaded fane of beauty, where the strange nobleman awaited her with open arms on the threshold.

Holding out her arms also, she entered. The iron gate closed behind them.

The accomplice waited without, leaning on a broken stake, bowed down with the vines.

At the moment when Carney, who had overestimated his strength, darted forward to unmask the Queen's confederate, the blood gushed like a torrent to his temples and throat and stifled him.

He fell amid the moss with so faint a sigh that it did not in the slightest disturb the watcher's tranquillity.

The inward bleeding from his wound reopening kept the man in a swoon.

When his pain and the coldness of the dew revived him, all had passed—Queen, gallant, and the conniver.

A clock at Versailles told him by the bell that it was two hours that he had been unconscious.

Night was one long delirium.

He was not calm in the morning, when, gloomy and mute, he proceeded towards Trianon Palace at ten o'clock.

The Queen was coming out from hearing service in the chapel. All heads and the halberds were respectfully lowered as she went by.

Charny saw some ladies redden with spite because she was so handsome.

Suddenly she spied the naval officer and she blushed while he uttered an exclamation of surprise. His steady look at her made her presage a fresh misfortune.

"I thought you had retired to your country seat," she said, going right up to him.

"I have returned," he replied bluntly, and almost impolite in tone.

She stopped stupefied, for never had the least impertinence escaped her.

After this exchange of almost hostile words, she turned to her maids of honor and said to Countess Lamotte with friendship :

"Good morning."

Charny started, for this was accompanied with a twinkling of the eyelids which in the vulgar would be called a wink. He looked steadfastly at Jeanne, who averted her face. He watched her still, till she had to turn, and studied her carriage.

While bowing to right and left the Queen noticed this behavior.

"Can he be frantic?" she wondered. "Poor fellow!" Returning to the count, she said: "How is your health, Count?"

"I am well, less to be pitied than your Majesty."

And he saluted curtly in a manner more alarming than his words.

"Something is wrong," thought Jeanne.

"Where are you stopping now?" inquired the royal lady.

"Versailles."

"Indeed? been here long?"

"Three nights," he said, laying stress on his words and supporting them with a gesture.

"Have you something to say to me?" she inquired, with angelic sweetness.

"Oh, I have only too much to say to your Majesty."

"Come," she said brusquely.

"I must keep watch," muttered Jeanne.

The Queen walked rapidly into her rooms. The rest followed as agitated as herself. Providentially, it appeared to Countess Lamotte, the Queen asked several ladies to accompany her to avoid this matter looking like a private confabulation with the naval officer. The countess slipped in among them.

When in her own room the Queen dismissed all the attend-

ants. She opened a window and sat at a writing desk loaded with letters to wait till everybody had gone. The impatient Charny, eaten up with ire, crumpled up his hat between his hands.

"Speak, my lord," said the lady: "you appear very much in trouble"

"How shall I begin?" said Charny, thinking aloud: "how can I accuse honor, faith and Majesty?"

"What do you say?" cried Marie Antoinette, quickly turning with a flaming stare. "It is early in the day for me to believe you intoxicated, and yet your bearing ill comports with that of a sober gentleman." She expected to see him crushed by this cold, scornful apostrophe, but as he remained motionless, she continued:

"But what is a queen but a woman, and I am a man as well as a subject."

"My lord!"

"Lady, do not let us embroil this matter by anger which would end in folly. I believed I proved to you what respect I had for royal Majesty; I fear I have proved my insane love for the royal person. So, make your choice, is it on the Queen or on the woman that I am to hurl approbrium and disloyalty?"

"If you do not begone, Lord Charny, I will have you expelled by my guards," cried the Queen, turning pale as she walked towards the speaker.

"But before I am expelled, I shall tell why you are an unworthy queen and a dishonored woman! Since three nights, I have been in the park," thundered Charny, wild with fury.

Instead of starting under the terrible stroke, as he expected, she raised her head and said, as she took his hand:

"My lord, you are in a pitiable state. Take heed; your eyes glitter, your hand trembles, your cheeks are pale and all your blood is flowing back to your heart. You are in pain—let me call for help."

"I saw you," he went on coldly; "with the man to whom you gave the rose, when he kissed your hands, and when you entered Apollo's Baths with him."

The Queen ran her hand over her forehead to convince herself that she was not dreaming.

"Come," she said: "sit you down lest you should fall. Sit, I bid you."

Charny let himself sink into an armchair, and the Queen sat near him on a stool. Holding his hands and looking into his eyes, she went on:

"Be calm. Appease your head and heart, and repeat what you have told me."

"Oh, do you want to be the death of me?" moaned the unhappy man.

"Let me question you, then. When did you return?"

"A fortnight ago and lodged in the wolf-huntsman's lodge on the edge of the park."

"You speak of a person whom you saw with me? when?"

"At midnight, Tuesday, for the first time. I saw you, and him, and the lady with you."

"Some one with me? would you know her again?"

"I thought I saw her a moment ago, but I dare not swear. The general figure resembles; but the face is hid when such crimes are committed."

"Well, you did not recognize my companion," went on the questioner with calm, "but me——"

"It was you I saw—do I not see you now?"

"But the person to whom you saw me give a rose—do you know him?"

"All I know is that he was addressed as 'Highness.'"

"Proceed," said she, beating her brow with concentrated choler. "Tuesday I gave him a rose, Wednesday——"

"Your hands to kiss: and Thursday, you passed an hour and a half with him in Apollo's Baths, where your companion left you alone."

The Queen rose impetuously.

"And do you swear that you saw me?" cried she, beating her bosom.

"It was you, really you. I die with shame and pain in saying: 'On my life, my honor, by heaven it was you, you!'"

The Queen walked up and down without caring that she might be seen from the terrace, where the curious spectators were looking up.

"If I were to swear, by my God, he—no, he would not

believe it. But I know. Was not this atrocious calumny already cast into my face? Was I not seen at the Opera Ball, to scandalize the Court? and at Mesmer's, amusing the loose women and frivolous men? You ought to know as you fought a duel on behalf of me."

"I fought then because I did not believe it. I should not fight now for I do believe it."

The Queen raised to heaven her arms, rigid with despair, while burning tears trickled down her cheeks.

"My lord, you owe me reparation," said she, after a prayer. "I require this: three nights you saw me in the park with a man. Go again at that hour: with me. If you behold that vision again, it cannot be me, for I shall be beside you. If there is another, I shall know—and then you will mourn for the pain you have caused me."

He pressed his heart with both hands.

"You do too much for me," he gasped; "I deserve death; kill me, but not with kindness."

"I will overwhelm you with proofs. Not a word to a single soul. At ten to-night, be at the Wolfhuntsman's house door where I have decided to convince you. Go, and let nothing show to strangers."

He bowed without saying anything, and went out.

In the second room he passed Jeanne, who covered him with her glances, ready to hasten into the Queen's presence, with the others.

---

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### WOMAN AND DEMON.

FOR a woman as keen as Jeanne, what she saw of Charny's conduct let her divine a number of things. The rest our readers will have guessed already.

After the meeting of Jeanne and Oliva, brought about by Cagliostro, matters had gone on swimmingly. The mock love play of Rohan and Oliva, taken by him and the witness for the Queen, was the schemer's invention, but the count might

have prompted it, so nicely did it chime with his designs.

Jeanne listened and scrutinized all the Queen did : but she was accustomed to be observed and betrayed nothing. The spy conjectured that love was at the bottom of it.

She heard the royal lady say to Lady Misery : " I am not well and shall retire at eight : send everybody out of the way."

" It is clear," muttered the countess ; " only a fool would be blinded."

A prey to the feelings the interview with Charny engendered, Marie Antoinette soon got rid of the courtiers; Jeanne speeded to Paris, congratulating herself for the first time since she came into the palace.

" The cards are getting shuffled," she said ; " it is time for me to undo my work."

She found the cardinal radiant, puffed up into insolence with pride and gladness ; sitting at his rich bureau, he began letters and tore them up without completing any work.

" Dear countess !" he exclaimed when his accomplice was announced and ran to meet her with kisses. Jeanne placed herself at ease for the dialogue, which the prince commenced by grateful protestations in sincere eloquence.

" You are a dainty lover," interrupted the lady, " and I thank you for that. Not for the charming present of silver-ware which I found at my house, do I say this : but for the precaution in not sending it to me in my private residence, also owed to your bounty. You are not so much a lucky man as triumphing demi-god."

" I am frightened at my happiness ; it burdens me by making me insupportable in the sight of others. I remember the ancient fable of Jupiter finding his bundle of lightning-flashes a nuisance."

Jeanne smiled.

" Do you come from Versailles? have you seen her? did she speak of me? my curiosity has become madness."

" Do not ask me."

" Oh, countess," and he turned pale. " Too great a joy is like the top of a wheel-tire of Fortune : the apogee is the commencement of the decline. But do not spare me if there be a mishap."

"I should myself call it bliss," replied the artful woman. "Your not being discovered."

"Pooh," he smiled. "With care, the wit of two hearts and such a mind as——"

"All this does not prevent eyes prying through the foliage."

"We have been seen?" exclaimed Rohan, losing color.

"I have reason to believe so, but not that you were recognized. If the secret were in any one's possession, Jeanne of Valois would be hastening to the world's confines and you would be a dead man."

"True. Your reticence roasts me as on a slow fire. Grant we have been seen. Persons have been seen strolling in the park before now. Is not that allowed?"

"Ask the King, whose park it is."

"Does he know?"

"If he knew, you would be in the Bastille and I in another prison. But as an eluded mishap is worth two promised hours of happiness, I come to tell you not to tempt fate again. Do not go to Versailles."

"Not in the day time," he said, smiling after a pang.

"Not at any time."

"Impossible! my love is one that will end only with my life."

"I perceive it," she ironically responded: "and that is why it is to reach that result that you will go to the park. Life and love will be reft from you with the same stroke."

"What terrors in one so brave yesterday."

"I am like the animals who fear nothing when there is no danger."

"I have the bravery of my race: I am only happy in the face of danger."

"Very well: but let me say——"

"Nothing: the sacrifice is made—the die is cast," said the loving prelate: "death if it must be, but love! I shall go back to Versailles."

"It will be alone; besides, she will not come. That is the news I was breaking to you gently. She will never see you again, and I have advised it."



"It is hard to bury the knife in a heart you know so sensitive," said the prince feelingly.

"It would be worse to let two mad creatures ruin themselves for want of good advice. I give it—profit by it if you can."

"I would sooner die."

"That is your own lookout and it is easy."

"If I must die," said the cardinal gloomily, "better the end of the reprobate; but with his accomplice who will be in the same hell."

"Holy man, you blaspheme," reproved the countess: "subject, you dethrone your Queen; man, you destroy a woman."

"But the park is not the only place to meet: there are a hundred others; she has been to your house, for instance."

"Not a word more: I do not feel able to bear the weight of such a tremendous secret any longer. What your rashness, or chance, or an enemy's malevolence may not expose, remorse will do. I know her to be weak enough to tell all to the King. If you saw her, you would pity her. Give her the consolation of silence."

"She will believe I forget her. She will accuse me as a coward."

"In saving her? never."

"Will a woman pardon him who deprives her of his company?"

"Do not judge her as you do me."

"I judge her to be strong and grand; I love her for her valor and her noble heart. She may depend on me, as I on her. For the last time I will see her: she shall know my entire mind, and I will fulfill whatever she orders then."

"Well," returned Jeanne, with the brutal energy of a surgeon deciding on amputation of a limb, "if you are desperate, do not act those childish things more dangerous than gunpowder, the plague and death itself. If you think so fondly of the woman, preserve her and not ruin her; and do not engulf in that ruin those who served you in true friendship. I am not playing with fire. Swear that for a fortnight you will not try to see the Queen, speak with her, write to her? Stay, or I depart on the road to Switzerland."

"Remain, countess, but find me some alleviation. The

wound is too painful. Then, on the name of Rohan, I will obey."

"Good, I have the opiate. Writing is not forbidden."

"Will she reply?" cried the love-sick priest, reviving.

"I will endeavor to make her do so."

The cardinal devoured the hand of Jeanne in kissing it, and called her his guardian angel. This must have made the fiend chuckle who dwelt in her bosom.

---

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE QUEEN'S SECRET.

THE same afternoon, at four, a horseman stopped at the Baths of Apollo on the park border. It was where Rohan had hitched his horse to a tree by the wall during three days.

"How it is trodden down here," said the rider, alighting, and examining the spot and the wall where the traces were clear of climbing over.

Taverney had not warred with the Mohawks for nothing, and he knew the trail of man and horse.

"Count Charny has been in Versailles a fortnight, and without showing himself. This is the secret door he selected for his entrance into the palace," sighed Philip as if his soul was torn up to go forth in the sigh. "Let us leave happiness to our neighbor," he continued: "what one is denied the other enjoys. God does not without reason make one happy and another unhappy—His will be done!"

But he wanted the proof that his rival was successful, and he determined to be on the watch that evening.

It was the occasion when the Queen was to meet Charny by her own appointment to try to see her double.

Taverney saw the pair, whose contiguity confirmed all his suspicions, waiting in the shrubbery till three quarters struck after midnight.

Then the Queen stamped with fretfulness.

"You will see that this night they will not come," she said, "Such misfortune only happens to me."

So speaking, she looked at her escort as though to pick a quarrel with him, and would do so had she spied in his eyes a spark of triumph or mockery.

But he, losing color as his suspicions returned, kept so sad and solemn that his face reflected the martyr's and angels' serene patience.

Taking him by the arm, the Queen led him to a chestnut grove.

"You say that the two met here and the woman gave the man a rose?" she inquired.

He nodded, and the Queen, fatigued by the long stay in the damp woods, leaned against the tree and let her head sink. Her strength failed her. Had not her companion lent his arm she would have dropped rather than drooped on the sward.

Hiding her face in her hands the dumb and motionless Charny saw a tear flow between the long, white fingers.

"My lord," she said abruptly, "I am doomed. I promised to prove that I was belied, and heaven has not been willing, and I bow to it. I have done what any woman would have done in my stead. I am not speaking of queens. But what is a queen when she wishes to reign over one heart alone? when she cannot win the esteem of even one honorable gentleman? Come, my lord, aid me to rise and depart; do not so scorn me as to refuse your hand."

He fell on his knees frantically and bent his brow on the sward.

"I suppose you would forgive me if I were not a hapless man who worships you?"

"You love me and believe me infamous?" she retorted.

"Oh, lady!"

"You, who ought to have a memory, you accuse me of giving a man a flower here, letting him kiss me, and giving him my love? no falsehood—you love me not."

"The phantom of the amorous queen was here—the lover's phantom also. Tear out my heart, for there those infernal shades are dwelling and they eat it up."

"You saw and heard them?" she cried, taking his hand and drawing him towards her with an exalted gesture. "It was really me? But would you be convinced to the contrary if I here, under the same tree, and on the same spot, offer you a rose, let you press my hand, and take you in my arms, saying: 'George, I love but one being in the whole world and that is you? Will that convince you that the daughter of Emperors is not shameful when the divine fire of such a love as becoms her, surges in her veins?'"

Charny groaned like an expiring man. The Queen's breath intoxicated him; her speech burnt him and her hand on his shoulder seared it; his heart warmed and his lips ached with the fire.

"Do you want my life?" panted he.

"Give me your arm," she said, rising; "and lead me where the others strolled. First, take the rose——"

She plucked from her bosom a flower which the fire had wilted. He clasped it to his breast.

"Here the other gave her hand to be kissed?" she questioned; and he seized hers.

"The place is purified now," she added with an adorable smile. "Let us go see that door by which the mock-Queen's lover fled."

Joyful and light in suspension on the lover's arm, he more happy than ever man before—she almost tripped over the turf to the Baths of Apollo. The moon burst from a cloud to aid them in their investigation. The white beam tenderly shone on the lady's face as she listened and looked. With a gentle pressure she passed with him through the door of the temple to which she had the key, and two o'clock sounded as the panel closed behind them.

"Farewell," she breathed. "To-morrow, we meet again."

Beyond the closed door, separating them, a man leaped up from the underbrush, and disappeared in the woods by the road; he carried with him the Queen's secret.

Next day Marie Antoinette went smiling and lovely to the morning mass. It was Sunday and beautiful. She appeared to inhale with more than usual pleasure the scent of her favorite flowers. She let everybody come to her; she was mag-

nificent in her gifts: she wanted to lift her soul to heaven.

On the right, in the double row of courtiers, stood Count Charny, complimented by his friends on his return, restoration to health and radiant mien. Court favor is a subtle perfume so readily divided in the air and so diffused that before the casket is more than opened the judges know and value it. Charny was only since six hours friend of the Queen, but everybody wanted to be his friend.

While accepting all the congratulations, he perceived one face in the groups over which he had to let his gaze wander, whose gloomy pallor and fixed expression struck him in the midst of his rapture.

He recognized Philip of Taverny tightly buttoned up in his uniform and grasping his swordhilt. Seeing that he tranquilly looked at him, and nothing further having come of the duel they fought after they whipped the pamphleteer, he made a bow, which the other gentleman returned from the distance.

He then left the crowd to go up to him, saying :

"Colonel, I ought to thank you for the interest you kindly took in my health, but I only came here yesterday."

Philip colored up but lowered his glance after looking at him.

"Here is the Queen," said Taverny as the trumpets sounded, without replying to the other's holding out his hand.

His bow was more sad than cool. A little surprised, the count hastened to rejoin his friends on the right row. Philip stayed where he was, like a sentry on duty.

The Queen came along, taking petitions and smiling, for she had seen Charny from afar; keeping her eyes on him with the rashness characterizing her friendships, called impudence by her enemies, she said aloud these words :

"Ask me anything you like this day, gentlemen, for I can refuse nothing."

Charny was penetrated to the heart by these words and their tone so magical. He shuddered with gladness and that was his gratitude to the speaker. She was suddenly drawn from her sweet but dangerous contemplation by a strange voice sounding.

The Queen caught sight of Taverny, and started with

surprise at finding herself between two men, one of whom she blamed herself for loving too little and the other too much.

"You, Colonel Taverney? you have something to ask me? oh, speak."

"Ten minutes' audience," he replied, bowing without laying aside his sternness.

Introduced into the library where the Queen held her receptions on Sundays, she received him with a pretendedly vexed air.

"I must confess that I feel uneasiness every time a Taverney wants to see me," she observed. "Your family is of evil augury. Kindly relieve me, colonel, by telling me that you announce no misfortune."

"It is good news, lady. Not only will your Majesty never more cloud the brow at the approach of a Taverney, but the last of the line will depart to return nevermore, from the Court of France."

"You, too, depart?" she exclaimed, dropping the vexed air assumed to meet the presumed grief of the interview.

"My sister had the sorrow of going from you," he said: "I am still more useless to your Majesty, and I go."

"Strange," muttered the Queen, sitting down in confusion, as she reflected that Andrea had left her after the interview with Charny at Dr. Louis', when she first had a token of his interest in her. "Whither go you, colonel?" she abruptly inquired of Philip, standing like a marble statue.

"To join Captain Lapeyrouse, now at Newfoundland."

"Have you not heard that a mournful fate is predicted for him?"

"That is the reason why I go to him," rejoined Taverney, with a smile of his manly, lofty beauty.

"Why do you go?" she demanded, approaching him with folded arms, her noble and daring temper aroused completely.

"Because I am fond of travel, and after the New World, I wish to go round the whole globe."

His hearer bit her lip with vexation and repeated what she said about Andrea.

"The Tavernays are an iron race, with steel hearts. Your sister and you are dreadful friends whom one finally must

hate. You go away not to travel, for you have voyaged far enough, but to quit me. Your sister talked of shutting herself up in a nunnery when she has a heart of fire under the sackcloth and ashes. But she would go, and I wish her joy. You who might be happy, go also. Was I not right to say you Taverneys bode me ill?"

"Spare us; if your Majesty deigned to look deeper into our hearts our boundless devotion would be perceived."

"Mark you, the Quaker, the philosopher, impossible beings——" she broke forth in anger: "she imagines this world a paradise where none but saints should dwell: you, a hell where devils flourish! Oh, colonel, leave us humans imperfect—ask not royal families to be otherwise than faulty too,—be tolerant, that is not so selfish."

She spoke with so much passion that the other had the best of the debate.

"Selfishness is a virtue when it enhances one's adoration," he retorted.

"All I know is," she said with a blush: "that I loved Andrea and she quitted me. I liked you and you go, likewise. It is humiliating to me for two such perfect persons—I am not joking—to quit my house."

"Nothing can humiliate those august like you," replied Taverney: "shame cannot reach brows so high."

"But if I bid you remain——"

"I should have the pain still to refuse your Majesty."

"There is something displeases you here," she went on; you are testy. I believe you are at odds with a gentleman—Count Charny, whom you wounded in an encounter," ran on the Queen, gradually becoming animated. "And as it is simple to shun those we have injured, you quit the court when you see him return."

Philip turned corpse-like rather than merely pale. Thus attacked and trampled on, he cruelly turned.

"Lady," he replied, "it is only this day that I see that Count Charny has returned to court, but I met my lord at two o'clock in the morning over at Apollo's Baths."

In her turn the Queen turned pale; after staring at the speaker with admiration mixed with terror at the perfect

courtesy which he had preserved in his wrath, she said in a dying voice :

“ It is well ; go ! I do not retain you.”

Taverney saluted for the last time, and slowly walked out.

“ This,” said the Queen, dropping thunderstricken into an armchair, “ this is the land of noble hearts !”

---

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHECKED BY CAGLIOSTRO.

THE cardinal had gone through three nights far different to what he had imagined.

No news of his idol, no hope of meeting her !

Then he remembered Jeanne's consolation and he dashed off a letter more impassioned than she, who thought of forging one for him, dared to fancy.

This letter put him out of the question as an accuser of her, when she would be asked to pay for the diamond necklace.

She had the cardinal for a buckler, but also wanted the royal person.

Who knew but that she was with Charny making the very shield for the Valois which she desired ?

She prepared for the shock. When the jewelers should claim the payment of the Queen, she would turn to the prince and he to Jeanne.

If he refused to pay her, she would threaten to publish his letters. He would pay.

Thenceforth no peril farther. After the saving of public exposure, the question of the intrigue arose. On this point wholly satisfaction. The honor of a prince of the Church and a queen regnant at a million and a half was too cheap ; Jeanne thought she might reckon on three millions if she held out.

Why was the plotter so sure on this head ?

Because no earthly power would prove to the cardinal that



he had not met the Queen three nights consecutively in the Versailles coppices. As for the sole and living proof to the contrary, Jeanne intended to remove it from the scene.

It was necessary to imagine some fable to get Oliva to flee, and flee voluntarily. Terror and love went on her side; while she told the girl that the plot of passing her off as the Queen on a love-sick swain would not be regarded by the King and Queen as a jest, but as treason, and be punished with imprisonment, she held out a hope that Beausire would be waiting at the end of the road she took to security.

Eleven o'clock was booming from St. Paul's steeple when the countess drove up to St. Louis Street, at the crossing with her own, in a post-chaise drawn by three powerful horses. A cloaked man on the box had directed the driver beside him.

"Keep the chaise here, my dear Reteau," said Jeanne to this accomplice: "for half an hour. I will bring somebody whom you must dash away with to my little house at Amiens, placing her in charge of my steward Fontaine who knows how to handle her. As you are armed and her life is threatened by a madman, fire on anybody trying to waylay you. You ask twenty louis for the job—you shall have one hundred, and I will pay expenses for your hieing to London where you may expect me within three months."

Reteau jumped into the carriage in lieu of his mistress who lightly trotted into St. Claude Street to her own house.

Oliva's window was unlighted, while Jeanne waved a lighted candle at her own in the manner agreed.

She thought she heard a faint "Yes!" blown across the space.

"She will come down and meet me without lighting up," thought the lady; "that is no harm."

As no one came, however, she went down into her garden and unlocked the door in the wall often used for the two women's meetings.

"Nothing venture, nothing win," she said as the pawing of the post horses spurred her on:

She crossed the yard of Cagliostro's house and went up the back stairs towards Oliva's room. Not a soul was about. Under the roomdoor a streak of light showed that some one

was there ; perhaps she was packing up for her journey.

Jeanne tapped at the door and as steps approached, she called in a low voice :

“Oliva ! my darling Oliva !”

The door opened ; a flood of light fell on Jeanne, who faced a man, holding a three-canded holder. She uttered a terrified shriek on seeing his countenance.

“Is not this Oliva ?” said the man, gently plucking aside the countess’s mantle. “Countess Lamotte ?” he added, with admirably natural surprise.

“Count Cagliostro !” pealed forth Jeanne, staggering and all but swooning.

Among all the dangers she had conjured up, this had never risen. It was not so very alarming at the first start, but on reflecting, and observing the stranger’s gloomy mien and profound dissimulation, the danger appeared frightful.

He politely held out his hand to prevent her falling down the stairs, and invited her to take a seat.

“To what do I owe the honor of this call ?” he inquired in a steady voice.

“I—I come—I was seeking, my lord——”

“Allow me, my lady, to summon my servants and chastise the knave who let a lady of your quality enter unannounced and unusherred.”

Trembling, she stayed the count’s hand going to the bell-pull.

“It must have been my Swiss janitor, who gets drunk,” imperturbably continued the count ; “not knowing you, he let you go by, and fell asleep without sending up your name.”

“I pray your lordship not to scold him,” faltered Jeanne, not suspecting the trap.

“Still I should have an explanation of your visit.”

Since she was no longer suspected of stealing in by the back way, Jeanne could lie on the reason for her presence.

“I came,” she very quickly said, “to consult your lordship on some rumors—delicate matters. You are understood to be a friend of Cardinal Rohan.”

“Not bad,” thought Cagliostro ; “run to the end of the string I hold ; but I defy you to go any farther.”

"I am indeed on good terms with his Eminence," he answered.

"You cannot be ignorant that he has displayed some affection towards me, and—as you read in heart and soul—I wish to learn if it is true that he loves elsewhere, in a high quarter? it is even said——"

On her he fixed his lightning eye; and she nearly fell back.

"I do indeed read in the shadows," said he; "but to do so clearly I must have some help. Will you kindly answer my questions? Why do you come here for me, as I do not live here? How did you get into this part of the house where there is no janitor, Swiss or otherwise, and no servants? and if you were not seeking me, who was it? you do not answer? then I must do so for you. You got in by means of this key—which I feel in your pocket;" and he held up the key juggled out of her pocket—and heaven knows that articles in a pocket were hard to extract from the Louis XVI. fashionable dresses! "You came here in search of a young woman whom I was sheltering in my house out of pure charity."

Jeanne reeled like an uprooted tree.

"Well, suppose this is so," she retorted; "what crime have I committed? May not one woman call on another? Call her and learn that our friendship may be acknowledged."

"Ah, you say that because you know that she is no longer here, for you spirited her away."

"I? an abduction? she has been taken away, and you accuse me of it?"

"I am convinced of it. Look here," resumed Cagliostro, taking up a paper from the table and reading aloud:

"MY LORD AND GENEROUS PROTECTOR: Forgive my quitting you: but above all things I love Captain Beausire, who has come to take me away. Farewell. Receive my assurance of gratitude."

"Beausire?" exclaimed Jeanne, petrified: "but he did not know Oliva's address."

"Oh, excuse me," went on Cagliostro, drawing a second slip out of his pocket and showing it to her, "this was picked up on the stairs by me in paying my regular visit daily. It must have dropped out of Beausire's pocket."

Shuddering, the countess read :

"Captain Beausire will find Mdlle. Oliva at the corner of St. Claude Street and the boulevard. Let him take her hence at once. A most sincere friend advises this. It is high time."

"But who wrote this?" faltered the countess.

"You, apparently, as you are the most sincere friend," coldly said Cagliostro.

"But how did he get in here?" almost screamed Jeanne, regarding her tormenter with rage.

"He might have used your key," impassibly responded the count.

"But I have it, and not he."

"The holder of one key may have a duplicate," again returned the magician, looking her in the front.

"You have convincing evidence," slowly said the baffled one, "while I only have suspicions."

"Oh, I have some of them also, and fully worth yours, my lady," answered the count, nodding slightly for her to go.

She started down; but all along the stairs were arranged the footmen, who each held up a lighted candelabrum, and they repeated in a loud voice at the master's cue :

"Make way for the Most Noble, the Countess of Lamotte Valois?"

She rushed forth, breathing fury and revenge as the basilisk spits fire and venom.

---

## CHAPTER XL.

"WHAT THE KING CANNOT DO, WHAT PRINCE DARE NOT DO, ROHAN WILL DO!"

AS the Queen had recommended wariness to the jewelers, they waited on the day for the deferred payment for it to come. As to any merchants, however rich, five hundred thousand francs is an important sum, they prepared a receipt in the finest handwriting in the establishment.

It was wasted for nobody came for it.

Next day, Bohmer went in a hack with his partner to Ver-

sailles where, at the palace door, he left him in the coach while he claimed an audience of her Majesty.

Trembling still from the interview with Charny in which she had become his idol without being his paramour, Marie Antoinette was walking in the corridor with joy, when she saw the respectful and contrite face of Boehmer.

Her smile was taken by him of good omen, and he ventured to crave audience in a couple of hours, after her dinner. He hastened to impart this good news to Bossange, who, having a cold in the head, did not want to show his swollen cheek to the sovereign.

"No doubt," said the diamond dealer, "the Queen has the cash in her drawer which was not paid in yesterday. She says at two o'clock because then she will be alone."

At the appointed hour he was shown into the royal presence.

"What is it, Boehmer?" demanded the Queen; "going to talk about jewels again? You are not in luck's way to do that at present."

"I—I wanted to say to your Majesty that yesterday was the period——"

"What period?"

"Pardon me, but your Majesty has so much to distract her mind. She may have let it slip her memory that—that yesterday was the one for first payment on the necklace."

"So you have sold the necklace?" said the Queen.

"Why, I—I thought I had," faltered the tradesman with stupefaction.

"But the parties would not conclude the deal? just like me? I can tell you, Boehmer, that the necklace will be a very profitable article to you if you continue, without selling it, to pocket such forfeits as you had from me."

"Your Majesty," said the poor man, his brow streaming with perspiration, "returned me the necklace?" You deny buying the necklace?"

"How now? what farce are you playing?" cried the lady angrily. "Is this accursed collar fated to drive somebody crazy?"

"Does your Majesty assert that she returned the necklace?" inquired Boehmer, trembling in all his limbs.

The Queen looked at him steadily while folding her arms.

"It is happy that I have something to refresh your memory," said she, "for you are quite a forgetful man, not to say disagreeable."

And she showed a receipt of the return of the ornament which caused his countenance to assume the expression of the most utter incredulity and then the most dreadful fright.

"But this is no signature of mine," roared Boehmer, when no longer strangled with fear and rage.

"Do you deny it?" she demanded, recoiling from his flaming eyes.

"Absolutely. This is not my receipt."

"Do you imply that I have stolen your precious necklace, sir?" said the Queen, slightly paling.

Boehmer pulled a letter from his case and held it out.

"I cannot believe that, if your Majesty had returned the collar you would sign a document like that," he said in a voice respectful though broken by emotion.

"What rag is this?" cried the lady. "I never wrote that. It is not my writing. Signed, 'Marie Antoinette de France?' Am I a *France*? am I not Archduchess of Austria? Come, come, Master B., this is too shallow a plot. Go and tell your forgers so."

"My forgers," repeated the tradesman, ready to faint dead off. "Does your Majesty suspect me, Boehmer?"

"You dared to suspect me," retorted Marie Antoinette haughtily.

The jeweler was obliged to lean on a chair for the floor spun round beneath him. He breathed heavily and the purple of apoplexy succeeded the livid pallor of collapse.

"Return me my receipt," said the Queen: "I hold it while you take the letter signed 'Marie Antoinette de France.' Any lawyer will tell you what it is worth."

Having tossed him the paper and taken her pretended letter, she turned her back and passed into the adjourning room. Boehmer, after some minutes in recovering, staggered out to the carriage where he told the mournful tale to Bossange, tearing his wig the while. Thereupon Bossange set to tearing his

hair, a most amusing sight to go on in a hackney coach while very painful.

Still men cannot spend a day tearing out their hair or anybody else's in a hack, and they concluded to make a united attack on the Queen.

Luckily they found her calmer when they threw themselves at her feet.

"An idea has struck me," she said, "which modifies my opinion about you. You are dupes of a hoax, not so for me. You say you have not the diamonds?"

"We have not," chorussed the pair.

"It is my lookout, not yours, to whom I handed them for you. Have you seen Lady Lamotte in the matter?"

"She wanted us to wait. But the letter purporting to be yours was brought us in the night by a messenger unknown to us."

"I have sent for Lady Lamotte," she said. "Cardinal Rohan, have you seen him?"

"He came to inquire if——"

"Very well go no farther," said she: "from the moment Prince Rohan is concerned, you are wrong to despair. I can guess that Lady Lamotte, in suggesting you should wait, expected—no, I do not know what she expected. Go and see the cardinal while I confront the person whom I charged with the necklace to return it, with this pretended receipt. I shall learn all before you, and will relieve you of anxiety."

The cardinal was lingering over three or four letters which Jeanne had palmed upon him as from the Queen when the two diamond merchants intruded rather excitedly upon him.

"Justice and mercy," said Boehmer in desperation as his prudent partner let him take the front of battle, "spare us your anger and do not force us to lack respect for the most illustrious prince in Europe."

"If you do, or are mad, I will have you thrown out of the window," replied the prince.

"We are not mad, but we have been robbed."

"I am not Chief of Police—go to him."

"But you had the diamond necklace in your hands."

"Oh, it is that necklace which has been stolen? what does

the Queen say?" asked the cardinal, evincing interest.

"She sent us to you."

"Very kind on her part. But you talk to me as though I were captain of a band of thieves who had despoiled you of the jewels."

"It was not taken from the Queen: she has a receipt that she delivered it to us—but that is false. So is the Queen's engagement."

"The Queen's engagement, signed by her? oh, let me see!"

But no sooner had he cast his eyes over it than he exclaimed:

"You are children. 'Marie Antoinette de France?' is not the Queen daughter of Austria? You are cheated—text and signature—all is false."

"Then Lady Lamotte ought to know the forger and the thief."

"I will send for her," said the cardinal, struck by the soundness of the suggestion.

And his servants went hunting for the countess as the Queen's were doing

"Meanwhile, my lord, what are we to say to the Queen, who says that your highness or Lady Lamotte must have the jewels, as it is not she."

"Tell her—no, say nothing. To-morrow, I officiate at Versailles Chapel Royal. Come and you will see me speak to the Queen, asking her about the necklace and you will mark how she replies. If she in face of me, denies—I." and he looked round on the ancestral portraits in his library, where the family motto was inscribed on the frames: "Kings cannot, princes dare not, but Rohan does!" adding—"I am Rohan and will pay."

With these words spoken with a loftiness of which plain prose cannot convey the idea, the prince dismissed the dealers.

---



## CHAPTER XLI.

## NOBLE, PRINCE AND QUEEN.

PALE and agitated, Captain Charny begged audience of the Queen which was granted as she yielded to the dictates of her heart. She reasoned with noble pride that the object of her pure love had the right to enter the palace when he would.

He came in, touched her hand tremulously and cried in a stifled voice :

"Oh, what a misfortune !"

"Indeed, something is the matter with you," said she, turning pale at seeing him so white.

"Do you know what I have heard,—what the King knows or will learn to-morrow ?"

She shuddered, thinking of the night of chaste delight passed in Versailles Park with the speaker, which some jealous eye might have seen and a spiteful tongue reported.

"Speak out, I am strong," she replied, but her hand was on her heart.

"It is said that you bought a necklace of the court jewelers."

"But I returned it," she quickly rejoined.

"It is asserted that you pretend to have returned it as you reckoned on paying for it, but the King refused the advance to you by Minister Calonne : then you applied to some one else to find the money, and that is your paramour."

"Do you, my lord, say this ?" cried she in sublime trustfulness. "Well, let them use that word. Lover is not the title either I would have you bear—let it be friend, as sweet enough for the truth between us henceforth."

Charny stopped, confounded by the strong and fecund eloquence flowing from true love, like the essence of a womanly heart. But his pause doubled her anxiety.

"Of what would you speak ? slander's language I do not understand. Do you comprehend it ?"

"Will you kindly lend me sustained attention, for the mat-

ter deserves it. Yesterday, I went with my uncle Comodore Suffren, to the court jewelers, to sell some diamonds brought from the East Indies. They were speaking about you; they related to the bailiff a dreadful story, commented on by your enemies. I am in despair. Tell me you bought the jewels, and failed to pay for them: but do not say that Prince Rohan paid. It is he who passed for the Queen's paramour: her 'banker,' the man whom the wretched Charny saw smiling on the Queen in Versailles Park, kneeling to her and kissing her hand. This man——"

"If you believe when I was not there, you will believe. I do not love you when you are here."

"I ask neither frankness nor courage: I only beg you to do me a service."

"Where is the danger, anyway?" asked the Queen.

"Only the insane would inquire. The cardinal, answering for the Queen and paying for her, ruins her. I am not speaking of the mortal displeasure of Charny in your being beholden to a Rohan, for that is not a grief to complain of though it kills one."

"It is you who are insane," replied Marie Antoinette.

"I am not, but you are unhappy and lost. I was not deceived when I said I saw you, for the deadly and dreadful truth appears to-day. Rohan perhaps boasts of it. But I am not the man to whine and wail, when time is precious. Will you save me from despair while saving yourself from opprobrium?"

"Accept help from one who scorns me?"

"Oh, I do not mince words with death in my face. If you do not listen to me, we shall both be dead this night; you of shame and I from having seen you die. Straight at the foe, my lady, at danger and death! Let us go together, I, the soldier, in my place but brave, as you will see; you, with force and majesty, into the thick of the fight. If you fall, it will not be alone. See in me a brother. If you need money to pay for the necklace——"

"I tell you——"

"Not that you have it no longer——"

"I swear——"

"Swear not if you would have me love you. The only means to save your honor and my affection is to pay the balance for the diamond ornament. Here he is a million and a half——"

"You have sold your family estates—you strip yourself for me? Yot have a generous and exalted heart, and I shall not haggle about matters with you. George, I love you."

"You accept?"

"No: I love you. I am the Queen and I accept nothing of my subjects though I may give them love and wealth. Now, dictate my conduct. What do you say Prince Rohan thinks?"

"That you are his *belle*."

"You are harsh, George. What do the jewelers think?"

"That the Queen being unable to pay, Rohan pays for her

"And the public?"

"That you have hidden the necklace, and will not tell until it is paid for by the cardinal, through love, or the King for fear of defamation."

"Charny, I look you in the face and I ask you what you think of the scene witnessed by you in Versailles' Park?"

"I believe that you need to prove your innocence," energetically replied the worthy gentleman.

"His Highness Prince Rohan: Cardinal and the Queen's Almoner," shouted an usher in the lobby.

"You have your wish," said the Queen. "I will receive him here and you shall hear every word that is spoken."

She pushed Charny into a side room, closed the door almost to, and ordered the visitor to be introduced.

Among the crowd of courtiers at the door who were escorting the magnificent prelate, were visible the two jewelers, Bossange and Boehmer.

The Queen went to meet her almoner, with a smile dying away on her lips.

He was serious to sadness. His calmness was of the man who expects a battle and of the priest who may have to forgive.

"I have many important matters to lay before your Majesty," he said, trembling, "but your Majesty tries to avoid my presence."

"So far from that—I was going to send for your Eminence."

"Am I alone with your Majesty?" he asked, throwing a suspicious glance towards the inner room.

"We are alone and you may speak in entire freedom."

He went up to the Queen's stool to be as far as possible from the folding doors.

"The King?"

"Have no fear of the King or anybody besides," said Marie Antoinette.

"I am afraid of you," said the cardinal in a voice of emotion.

"All the less, as I am not a terrible person. Speak out and in few words. I like frankness, and if you are a man of honor, do not spare me. It is said that you have grievances against me. Speak—I like war, not being of a blood which fear freezes. I know you come of the like. What have you to reproach me with?"

The prelate sighed and rose to breathe more freely. Master of himself, he said :

"Lady, you know what is going on about that diamond necklace?"

"No, I do not, and shall be obliged by your telling me."

"Why has your Majesty restricted me so long to communicating by Third parties? why, if some cause for hate arises, am I not addressed to remove it?"

"I do not know what your lordship is talking about and why I should be thought to hate you. But I do not suppose this is the object of this interview. Will you kindly give some definite information about this unlucky necklace and Lady Lamotte?"

"I was going to ask that of your Majesty."

"Excuse me, but if anyone knows her address it ought to be your Eminence."

"On what grounds?"

"Oh, I am not here to receive your confessions. I wanted to see the lady but have uselessly sent for her. You must own that her disappearance is odd."

"I am also astonished by it; for I besought her to come and see me; but she did not reply to me either."

"Let us leave her, my lord, and speak of ourselves."

“Oh, no, your Majesty, let us speak of her, for some of your speech throws me into painful suspicions—I seem to be blamed for attention to the countess.”

“I have not blamed you for anything—but I may have to do so.”

“Oh, such a suspicion explains all your sensitives and I comprehend the rigor which you show towards me.”

“No, we cease to understand,” corrected the Queen. “You are in impenetrable obscurity and it is not to involve us more blackly that I required explanations. To the facts!”

But the cardinal clasped his hands in entreaty for her to keep on as she was, for he expected that a few words would set him at ease.

“Where is the necklace I returned to the jewelers’?”

“Returned to me? I know not.”

“Yet it is very plain. Lady Lamotte took the necklace to restore it in my name. They say not, and that the receipt I hold is false. With a word Lady Lamotte could explain but she is not to be found. I judge she dreads my anger and avoids me because she was plotting with you to force the collar upon me another time, while fobbing the merchant off. Have I built up the plan out of the shadows? Let me blame this lightness, disobedience to my formal orders, and you will be quits with a reprimand—and all will be finished. But for mercy’s sake, clearness; I do not want any cloud over my life at present; do you hear?”

Recovering from his amazement, the cardinal smothered a sigh and said:

“I have not the necklace and I have no knowledge of Lady Lamotte. This is the first time I have to complain of your not understanding me. If you review in your mind my letters——”

“Your letters? have you been writing to me?”

“Too seldom; but all that was in my heart.”

Up sprang the Queen, crying out:

“We are playing at odds with each other; have done with the jest! What letters are you talking about and what have you in your heart to impart to me?”

“Good heavens, I may have too loudly expressed the secret of my soul!”

"Are you in your right senses? you speak like one trying to trap me, or to entangle me before witnesses."

"Do you mean we have a hearer? is it Lady Lamotte? then, it matters not as she is our friend."

"Our friend?"

"Yes; she will only aid me to awaken the memory if not the attachment of your Majesty."

"My memory—my attachment? I drop from the clouds."

"Spare me," said the priest bitterly. "Love me not, if you please, but do not offend me."

"Love? you are a traitor—you insult the Queen!"

"You are a faithless Queen—A woman without a heart. Why beguile me on, into a mad love? why feed me with hopes?"

"Am I mad or is this a villain?"

"Would I have ever dared to ask for the midnight interviews?"

The Queen uttered a long screech of rage to which a deep sigh in the next room seemed to echo.

"Would I have thought of coming into Versailles Park had not Lady Lamotte led me? steal the key to the door by the wolf-huntsman's house? ask you for the rose you wore? adored, accursed! withered under my kisses! did I force you to give me your hands to kiss, which sent a thrill through me and drove me wild? In my highest flight of glad pride would I have dared to dream of that third meeting when under the white sky, in the sweet stillness—amid perfidious love! You must know that to continue so deceived I would give my property, liberty and life!"

"Lord Rohan, if you would preserve all these, tell me you have dreamt this tissue of horrors. You did not come here to meet me——"

"I came to meet you," said the other nobly.

"You are a dead man if you sustain such language."

"Rohan never lies. Death if needs must, but I saw you in the Park, with Lady Lamotte."

The Queen drew herself up, solemn and terrible.

"Since you will not bow to heavenly justice," she said, "the King's shall deal with you."

She rang so violently that several women ran in.

"Inform the King that I wish instant speech of him," she ordered.

Determined to brave it all, the cardinal stood in a corner while an officer ran with the message. Marie Antoinette went a dozen times to the inner room-door as if she lost her reason but found it there.

---

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE ARREST.

TEN minutes had not passed before the King appeared, with one hand plunged among the ruffles of his shirt. In the group of courtiers behind him, the frightened faces of Boehmer and Bossange showed they scented the storm.

"Sire," began the Queen, "Cardinal Rohan says incredible things, which I pray you to make him repeat."

The King turned to the cardinal who was in a strange and incomprehensible position. Could a gallant repeat to the husband what claims he felt to have over the wife? and he a subject?

"Oh, about that necklace," said the King. "Speak, I am listening."

Rohan chose his course: he would suffer the attack most honorable to King and Queen; if the second charge came up, well! he would meet it as became a brave knight.

"Yes, about the necklace, Sire," he faltered.

"Well, did you buy it? yes, or no."

"I did not," said the Queen, as Rohan looked at her in hesitation.

"There is the Queen's word," said Louis; "have a care, my lord."

"Of what?" returned the prelate with a smile of scorn.

"The jewelers say that in default of the Queen, you pledged yourself," went on the monarch.

"I am not refusing to pay," rejoined Rohan, with a still more scornful glance. "What the Queen states, must be true."

Marie Antoinette shuddered; the cardinal's disgust was not

an insult as she did not deserve it, but it was the vengeance of an honorable man. She was frightened.

"My lord, then nothing remains of the matter but a forged paper."

"The Queen is free to attribute both forgeries to me," returned Rohan: "what is the difference in doing one or two?"

"Take care," said the King, checking his wife's outburst of indignation; "you aggravate your situation. I bid you justify yourself and you seem to accuse. Persons say a necklace is stolen from them: by offering to settle for it, you confess you are guilty."

"Who will believe that?" said the prince with the utmost disdain.

A quiver of anger ran over the usually placid face of the King.

"Sire," replied the prelate, "I do not know what is said, or was done; but I have not the necklace; I affirm it is in the hands of one who ought to come forward and wishes not. Thus am I forced to say to her in the words of Holy Writ, 'Whoso diggeth a pit for another, let him take heed lest he fall into it himself.'"

"Madame," said the King whose arm Marie Antoinette was about to take, "the debate is between you. For the last time, have you the necklace?"

"No, by my mother's honor and the life of my son!"

Filled with joy at this declaration the King turned to the accuser and said:

"Justice and you must finish the difference, unless you ask my clemency."

"That is for the guilty—I prefer human justice."

"But, my lord, your silence eaves my fame at stake," protested the Queen. "I will not dwell in this burning silence, if you do: it suggests a cause for generosity which I shall not bear. Learn, Sire, that the cardinal's crime is not in the theft of the necklace. Your plots seek the night-shade—I look up in the open day. Sire, summon the cardinal to tell you what he just now said to me here."

"Lady," interrupted Rohan, "beware—you overstep the limits."



"Ha!" ejaculated the King haughtily; "who thus speaks to the Queen? Do I do it myself?"

"That is just it," said the royal lady; "Cardinal Rohan asserts his right to do so. He says he has letters to back the pretence."

"Let me see them!" thundered the monarch.

The priest ran his hand over his chilly brow and wondered how heaven had created a being so full of perfidy and audacity; but he held his tongue.

"This is not all," pursued the lady, becoming animated under the generous silence of the prince; "he claims to have had love-meetings."

"Madam, for pity!" said the King.

"For shame!" cried the prince. "Lady, I have no proofs."

"You have an accomplice, too. Name her, or I shall: it is Lady Lamotte."

"Ah," said the King, delighted that his prejudice against Jeanne was verified, "let us see this woman and question her."

"She has disappeared," said the Queen: "ask this gentleman for her, for he had every reason to get her out of the way."

"Others had more," retorted the cardinal: "that is why she is not to be found."

"Since you claim to be innocent, will you not help us trace the guilty?" said the Queen, with fury.

After one look, Rohan folded his arms and turned his back.

"My lord, you go hence straight to the Bastile," said the offended King.

"As I am, in my pontifical robes," said the cardinal, "having come to say the service at the Royal Chapel, before the court? reflect on the scandal, my lord. It will fall heavy on the head that raises it."

"I will have it so," persisted the sovereign.

"You make a priest unjustly suffer before he is charged, and tortured before accusation is not legal."

"Still it shall be so," said the King, opening the door and looking for some one.

Prominent in the crowd was the Duke of Breteuil, formerly an intimate friend of Rohan, but latterly his bitterest foe. In

the King's agitation, the Queen's exaltation and the cardinal's attitude, he saw the downfall of an enemy.

The King had scarcely ceased whispering to him than he, the Keeper of the Seals, usurping the functions of the Captain of the Life-guards, cried in a ringing voice :

"Arrest the Cardinal, Prince Rohan !"

The prisoner passed before the Queen, without the slightest bow, which made her proud blood boil. He bowed lowly to the King, and went up to Breteuil with so skillful an expression of pity for him that the noble did not believe his vengeance was complete enough.

The King remained alone with his Queen, the doors being open, while the cardinal departed for temporary detention in the palace while his fate was decided on.

"Let me tell you," said Louis, breathlessly, for he was with difficulty containing himself, "this must end in a public trial, scandal under which the fame of the guilty will fall."

"I thank you for choosing the only way to clear me," said she : "you have acted like a king. Believe that I have acted like a Queen."

"It is well," said he, overflowing with lively joy : "we shall finish with these mean things. When the serpent shall be crushed, we will live quietly, I hope."

Meanwhile the cardinal turned to the lieutenant of the Life-guards who arrested him and asked if he might notify his household of the incident. The young officer let him send a note by a special messenger.

"She ruins me," mused the prince, "but I save her. I act for the King's sake, and I hope heaven will forgive me."

---

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE ONLY WAY OUT.

THE minute the King left her to herself, the Queen ran to the room where Charny had been shut in.

She opened it, returned to sit in an armchair and silently waited for her most dreaded judge to decide her fate.

He came forth sadder and more pale than he went in.

"You see that all opposes our being friends," he said. "With the public clamor, there will be no repose for me or truce for you. All the more furious at your having first wounded them, your enemies will rush upon you as on the stricken deer."

"Then you do not think this enough—this perilous aggression on a prince of the Church, my declared hostility to him and his, my fame exposed to the debates in Parliament? I do not mention the King's trust shaken in me: you ought not to dwell upon that, of course? he is merely one of those dullards who know not what love is."

She smiled with bitterness while tears stood in her eyes.

"You still believe me guilty," she proceeded. "What thought you of Cardinal Rohan's behavior?"

"He is neither a madman, as you asserted, nor a weakling, as one might believe. He is a lover who is convinced though his error will lead him to destruction and you to——"

"Go on."

"Inevitable disgrace. I see the spectre, that odious woman, Lady Lamotte, vanished when her testimony might restore you all, repose, honor, security. She is the evil genius, the scourge of royalty: as if to punish your husband's line for ousting hers from the throne, she will wreck the monarchy! It was imprudent to let her enjoy your bosom friendship and share your secrets——"

"She shared no secrets—it is not she who has my bosom friendship. But you must not enjoy it longer. It seems to me that a man cannot care to see a woman whom he disbelieves and does not esteem. I counselled you to live at a distance from the court," she burst forth. "I was right. Besides, I foresee that your absence is necessary. Your name will come up in this matter."

"Impossible."

"Reflect on what has happened. The cardinal is convinced of an error, into which he has been beguiled—you say this yourself. Those who lay such snares are able to prove that you are a traitor to your ruler, and a shameful companion for me. Those who so skillfully invent falsehood, will discover the truth of my love for you.

"Do not lose time—flee! retire to your estate, avoid the outcome of the trial at hand. I do not wish my destiny to drag your career down into despond. Away! and elsewhere seek what the Queen of France cannot give you: faith, hope and happiness. It may be a fortnight before Parliament assembles, and the trial is arranged. Go! your uncle has two ships ready for the sea; select one, and sail afar. I bring bad luck: shun me. I looked forward to but one thing, your love—it is not mine, and I feel alone."

"I cannot execute your will; I cannot go. I love you, as you are, no matter what you are."

"What?" she said, with a lively and impassioned accent; "has this accursed and ruined Queen, this woman whom a Parliament will try, opinion condemn, and her royal mate perhaps drive away—has she found a heart to love her?"

"A servitor who venerates her and offers all his blood in exchange for one tear."

"Then this woman is blessed," said Marie Antoinette, "she is proud and reckons herself happiest of her sex. She is too happy, George Charny: I do not understand what made this woman mourn—forgive her."

He fell at the feet of his idol, and kissed the hem of her dress in transcendent love.

This was the moment when the door of a secret corridor opened and the King—whom Count Provence had from his spies' information confided the report of the Queen meeting a cavalier at Apollo's Baths—stopped on the sill, as if thunderstruck.

He had caught the very man whom Provence's spies had recognized, at his wife's feet.

The two lovers exchanged a glance so full of fright that their greatest enemy must have pitied them.

Charny slowly rose and bowed to the interrupter. The lace ruffles fluttered from the heaving of Louis' heart.

"Count Charny," said he: "it is far from right to catch a nobleman in the act of theft. Yes, to rob a husband of his wife's affections is a theft. When the wife is a Queen, it is treason. My keeper of the Seals will prove this to you. my Lord Charny."

The count was about to asseverate his innocence but the Queen rushed to the rescue.

"Sire," she said, "I see that respect chains the gentleman's tongue and that you are still on the road where suspicions cluster: but I who know this gentleman's heart, must not let him be accused without defending him."

Thus she gained the critical moment. She stopped the King's doubts and diverted his mind.

"Do you tell me that I did not see Count Charny kneeling to you? then, as he was not bid to rise——"

"He had a boon to crave," stammered the Queen: "that is common enough at court, meseems. I should have bidden him rise, if the favor had been one to be granted, for I hold the count in particularly high estimation."

Charny breathed again; the King's eye was dulled and his brow was disarmed.

In the meantime the Queen fretted at having to lie and at not hitting on a good pretext.

Charny was too lofty-minded to invent one, and he feared in his delicacy to go too far in helping the lady.

"Well, what is the favor?" demanded the King, "vainly solicited by the count? I may be more happy than you," he went on, politely to temper the first sternness of his tone: "my lord will not have to kneel long to me!"

"What can be sued for on bended knee," went on the lady, "but something impossible to grant? he wishes leave to marry."

"Really?" queried the monarch, relieved, but his jealousy reviving, he continued, without noticing how his poor wife had suffered in speaking the words; and how pale Charny was with sympathy with her pain: "What is impossible about Count Charny's marriage? Does not he come of a noble stock—has he not a fine fortune—and is he not brave and handsome? None but princess of the blood royal or a married woman could be denied him. So, name me the Lady whom Count Charny wants to wed, and I will remove any difficulty—to please you."

Urged on by the increasing peril, by the consequence of her first lie, the Queen forcibly said:

"Nay, this is one of the blocks beyond your power."

"I should like to hear what is impossible for the monarch," replied Louis with sudden wrath.

The Queen wondered what obstacles she could state as paramount. Suddenly light traversed her brain.

"My lord, the woman whom Count Charny seeks is in the nunnery."

"That is a good reason," said the King; "it is hard indeed to take from heaven to give to man. But if it be not a nun in the black veil——"

Marie Antoinette was afraid that Charny would speak and that she would be stung by the name of someone whom he had loved before her.

"But, sire, the lady is Mdlle. Andrea of the Taverney Redcastle family."

The naval officer uttered an exclamation and hid his face in his hands, while the speaker pressed her hand on her heart and nearly sank into an easy chair.

"Mdlle. Taverney who retired into St. Denis Abbey? but she has not taken any vows."

"She is going to do so."

"Why?" he asked with a remnant of distrust.

"She is poor, for you enriched her father alone."

"We can remedy that. As Count Charny loves her——"

The officer looked at the Queen who watched him suspiciously, and the King assumed the silence to be respectful assent.

"Good," resumed he, "and no doubt the young lady loves the count. I will endow the bride, and give her the money the count refused the other day. Thank the Queen, my lord, for having told the story and assuring you happiness for life."

Taking a step forward, Charny bowed like a statue on which life had been by miracle bestowed.

"Oh, this justifies your throwing yourself on your knees again," said the King with that tendency to vulgar merriment which in him diminished the ancestral nobility.

By a spontaneous movement the Queen held out her hands to the officer who knelt and in kissing them, prayed that his soul would go out forever in the caress.

"Come, my lord," said the sovereign, "and leave the lady to attend to your affairs."

He passed on so quickly that Charny could glance behind and see the ineffable anguish of the eternal farewell darted by the royal eyes.

The door closed between them like an insurmountable barrier to their guiltless love.

---

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE DEAD HEART.

ANDREA had quitted the court to seclude herself in the convent, having broken all ties; proud as Cleopatra, she could not bear the idea that Charny could think of any woman but herself, not even the Queen.

"This man whom I worship in the shade, who is but a shade, he will be true to me, and he will smile on me alone."

Hence she passed painful but free nights; she was happy that she could weep when miserable, and curse her fate when excited. She preferred the voluntary absence which preserved her love and heart in integrity to seeing the man whom she might detest if he was forced to pretend affection for his Queen.

Nevertheless, something like a perfumed breeze from the court struck her when she heard that the Queen had come to the Abbey to see her.

"Why does my heart thrill?" she marvelled. "How does it concern the daughter of Taverney that the sovereign should come hither? am I proud, or happy—nay, I love the Queen no longer."

Yet, when she saw the Queen seated in the lady superior's chair, with the noblest heads of the chapter bent to her, she palpitated, and bent her own head.

"Oh, have you come at last? I want to speak with you," said the visitress partly smiling.

The abbess and the sisters left the two together and it

seemed to the maid of honor that her heart beat more loudly than the clock.

"As a nun, you make a singular impression on me," began the Queen. "It is a severe lesson from the tomb to see a companion in my pleasures lost so soon to the society we lived in."

"Who makes so bold as to give lessons to your Majesty?" inquired Andrea. "Death alone will warn you when he cometh to take you. A queen is doomed to know nothing but inevitable necessities. She has all that can ameliorate life; to embellish a career she can deprive others to benefit herself."

"You make an ogre of a sovereign to swallow up the bliss and wealth of the subjects. Am I such a woman, Andrea? did you have to complain of me when you belonged to the court?"

"When you put that question to me on leaving, I had to say, No—I say that again," Andrea replied.

"I see that you do not forgive me for having been cold towards your brother? He may have accused me of levity—caprice, perhaps?"

"My brother is too respectful a subject to blame his sovereign," replied the other, trying to maintain sternness.

"Do not talk in this strain, my friend," went on the Queen: "You tear my heart. You may envy the rulers for having control of their subjects' lives and wealth; but they cannot rule the heart. Can I not have one friend like you?"

"I assure you that I loved you as none other in this world," rejoined Andrea, shaken in her firmness. She blushed and hung her head.

"You loved, but you love no longer? cursed be the sanctuary where such feelings are frozen and perverted!"

"Do not accuse my heart, which is dead," said Andrea, quickly.

"Young and lovely, do you say that? Not as long as you have this smile and beauty—do not say that!"

A deadly chill ran through her veins for fear that she had come uselessly.

"Andrea, if you applaud yourself on this retirement from society, then it is superfluous for me to speak farther. But



God is witness that I expected to make you happy ; I came to take you back to the Court."

"Good heavens, never !" cried the other with a bitter smile. "I refuse, whatever pain it gives your Majesty. Leave me in my cell, to my misery and isolation."

"But," said the temptress, raising her eyes, "the position I was to propose to you would give the lie to all the humiliation you may have felt from want of it—the marriage I meditated will make you one of the greatest ladies at the court."

"A marriage," echoed the stupefied hearer. "I refuse, I refuse !"

With a frightful ache in the heart, Marie Antoinette prepared to pour forth her entreaties. But Andrea hushed her at the start.

"I want to hear no more," she interrupted, "unless it be the name of the man who would accept unworthy me for his life-companion ; I have endured so much from being humbled that I wish to thank in my prayers this generous soul—"

"It is the Count of Charny," said the Queen, after hesitation, but she had to go to the end.

"Charny ? George Charny ?" burst forth the other with alarming fire. "He consents to this marriage ?"

"He begs for your hand."

"Oh, I accept him—I accept," cried the maid of honor, transported into heaven. "It is I whom he loves, I see ; as I love him !"

With a dull groan the Queen receded, livid and quaking. She fell upon a chair while Andrea, out of her senses, knelt and covered her hands with kisses and tears.

"When do we leave this hateful place ?" she said when she could speak through her laughs and sobs.

"Come now," replied the other, feeling her life ooze from her but wishful to save her reputation before she expired.

Leaning on Andrea she got up, turning her icy cheeks from her burning lips : while the joyful woman made preparations for the departure, she sobbed :

"Is not this enough suffering for one heart ? But I must thank you, Oh, King of kings, for you save my children from shame, and leave me the right to die shrouded in my royal mantle."

## CHAPTER XLV.

## ONE OF CAGLIOSTRO'S PREDICTIONS COMES TRUE.

WHILE the Queen was settling the future of Andrea of Taverny at St. Denis, Philip with an aching heart at what he had learnt, was preparing to go on his travels.

His father was expected every moment and would arrive to bid him goodspeed.

Indeed the baron was returning content; during the last three or four months he had begun to fatten. He had missed his daughter, but on the other hand bright were the hopes he built upon his son, although the latter's behavior perplexed him.

On this occasion he came to meet him with a smile.

"Admirable," said he, with a wink, "you are hoodwinking them skillfully. So we are going on your travels, eh? capital! nobody will think it you who live in seclusion at the wolf-huntsman's house, for you have thrown the dust in all eyes."

Philip stared at him in the belief that the old gentleman had gone mad.

"Yes, your conduct is a masterpiece. You have thrown all off the scent. Fifty pair of eyes say it was Rohan; a hundred that it was Charny. I alone guessed that it was you who promenaded with the Queen, and conducted her to the Baths of Apollo. But do not be afraid of me—you may trust in your fond old father, whose worthy pupil you are, for you have tricked your master."

At the moment when the knight, infuriated, blasted the chuckling old man with a fierce look, premonition of a tempest, the rumble of a coach was heard rolling into the yard, and Philip's attention was called to the exterior.

He heard the servants' gladly call out:

"Welcome to our young lady!"

"Andrea here?" he muttered: "I must go to her the first, if you please."

As he spoke, a second carriage dashed into the yard.

"It is the day for adventures," said the baron.

"My Lord the Count of Charny," announced the footman.

"Conduct the count into the parlor," ordered Philip, "where the baron will receive him. I must confer with my sister."

He quickened his pace to be the sooner with one whom he loved.

As soon as he opened the boudoir door, Andrea embraced him with a joyous air to which the hopeless lover was little accustomed.

"Bounty of heaven, what has happened?" he demanded.

"Something happy, most happy, brother dear!"

"I am glad to hear that—but not so loud—we have a visitor and there is no need for the Count of Charny to overhear you."

"He? oh, that is all well," said Andrea; "I knew he would be here. But let me change from my dusty traveling dress; the Queen came after me at the nunnery and took me off anyhow."

Light and merry she skipped away to alter her toilet while the astounded Philip turned to the other door where, on the farther side, Charny was greeted by the baron.

"I must ask your excuses, baron," began the count, "for not having my uncle Suffren with me, to make the request. I come to beg the hand in marriage of your daughter Andrea."

"Oho," thought the old man, "the news of Philip being in favor of the Queen has got about. Here is a gallant who wants to marry into our lucky family. This request is very flattering to our house, my lord," he responded, "and I will let my daughter know——"

"It is superfluous," said Charny, coldly; "her Majesty, the Queen has kindly consulted the lady on this head, and the decision is favorable. As for the fortune, I am rich enough for both, and the lady is not a match one can haggie about."

At this juncture, Philip stepped into the room. He was pale and while one hand was hidden in his ruffle the other was clenched.

"My lord," said he, "my father still must go into business details for which he will get the documents. Meanwhile, I will have the honor of talking the preliminaries over."

The baron saw that he must not resist his son who had become at a bound the head of the house. He departed, de-

lighted at the rise of the Taverneys whose daughter made a royally fostered marriage and whose son no doubt was a royally favored wooer.

"Count Charny," broke forth Philip when assured that the two were alone, "how dare you come and ask my sister in marriage? is it because knowing her to be the friend of the lady whom you love, you counted on her procuring you facilities to see her often? do you want to make me your brother-in-law so that I will not reveal your hiding in the wolf-huntsman's cottage, your mysterious strolls in Versailles Park, and the exchange of loving farewells at the little side-door——"

"In heaven's name, say you know nothing——"

"How am I to know nothing when I saw you come out from Apollo's Baths at two in the morning?"

Charny staggered back like a death-struck man seeking for support. The other regarded him in ferocious silence, enjoying this retaliation for the agony he had made him suffer.

"Still," said Charny, reviving, "I must ask the hand of your sister. Do you know why the Queen is lost unless this wedding takes place? this morning, when Rohan was arrested, the King caught me at the Queen's feet——"

"Heavens!"

"She said that I was only suing for your sister's hand. Now you know why the Queen is lost unless your sister marries me."

A shriek and a groan interrupted the pair. George ran to where the former was emitted; at his feet on the sill of the door he opened, lay Andrea, dressed in white like a bride she had swooned on hearing all the secret.

Taverney had run to the groaning man: it was his father, dying of an apoplectic fit.

Cagliostro's prediction was verified.

"Baron Taverney is dead," said Philip; "I am the head of the house. If my sister survives, I will give you her hand in wedlock. She gives her happiness for the Queen's sake, as I some day may be happy enough to give her my life. Farewell, my *brother*——"

And passing by George who knew not how to get away without stepping on one of his victims, Philip lifted up Andrea and carried her out.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## BRANDED

CROSNE was the most delighted of Chiefs of Police known in history.

The fruit of a criminal magistrate is the conviction as the blossom is the arrest.

Arrest after arrest succeeded that of the Prince of Rohan, in the celebrated case of the Diamond Necklace.

First his men captured Reteau, who led to the apprehension of Lady Lamotte. Beausire and Oliva were caged, though they were a little supported in their jail by the assurance of Cagliostro that he would yet see them through its doors.

This hope was clouded when they heard that he, too, as the friend of Rohan, had also been imprisoned in the Bastile.

Thanks to his craft, his almost supernatural powers, he escaped with banishment, and from his refuge in London, he launched that famous letter which was the first push of the battering-ram against the walls of the stronghold of tyranny.

After demolishing King, Queen, cardinal, the vultures who preyed on the people, and Breteuil, above all as the personification of ministerial tyranny, he said :

"I am asked if I shall return into France ? Assuredly, when the ground where the Bastile stands will be a popular strolling ground !"

The trial had added little new to what was known about the diamond necklace, stolen skillfully by one of the persons accused who incriminated one another.

But the sentence interested everybody.

Reteau, *alias* Villette the forger, was sent to the prison hulks. Countess Jeanne Lamotte was to be branded, whipped and kept in a Magdalen Asylum forever. Cagliostro was dropped out of the indictment : Oliva was released without comment. For what the cardinal had confessed he was banished and deprived of his court functions.

In the Justice Court, a scaffold was erected eight feet high in full sight of the three thousand sightseers. On it stood a post, having iron rings set in it, with a placard on the top which was not legible.

The way up to the platform was by a ladder in the lack of steps. The bayonets of the archers formed a railing with spikes around it.

The door in the wall opened and out came the doomed countess, while shouts of "down with the thief, the forger!" sounded.

Jeanne was at the end of her forces, for she had been fighting with the executioners, but not of her rage. She ceased to shriek because the clamor of the mob overcame her: but she called out some shrill metallic words which hushed the murmurs as by enchantment:

"Do you know who I am? I come of the blood of your kings. In me is struck, not a culprit, but a rival. More than that, an accomplice."

She was interrupted by the police hirelings.

"Yes, an accomplice who knew the secrets of——"

"Look out!" whispered the turnkey.

She looked up—the executioner was flourishing a scourge! At this she forgot all and screamed for mercy.

Hooting drowned her yell, while she giddily clung to the flagellator's knees and tried to seize the whip which he used but feebly. At the first lash she sprang up and began to struggle for the weapon.

Suddenly she relaxed her violence for his aid was holding up a red-hot iron for him. The heat it sent forth made her bound back with a savage howl.

"Branded? brand me?" she screamed.

"Yes, yes," roared a thousand voices.

"Help, help," said Jeanne, bewildered, trying to get the rope off from round her hands.

As the executioner could not open her dress, he tore it off her shoulder; but Jeanne rushed upon him and made him retreat so that he dared not touch her: the mob hooted him for his clumsiness and piqued him in his conceit. The crowd admired the courage of the little, frail woman holding the

burly headsman at bay : impatience rose : the jailer had got off the platform : the soldiers looked on in disorder.

"Have done !" called out an imperious voice which the executioner no doubt recognized, for he pushed Jeanne down with a vigorous repulse and held her head with his left hand. But she rose, hotter than the iron threatening her, and yelled in a voice superior to the uproar :

"Cowards, will you see me tortured ? will you not defend me ?"

"Be quiet," said the judge's clerk.

"Yes, what good will that do me ? the more fool I, for if I spoke all that I know about the Queen, .I might be slain but not dishonored !"

She said no more, for the King's Commissioner rushed upon the scaffold with help, and they held the woman while the executioner impressed her shoulder with the royal brand. She uttered a howl, with no equivalent in human cries.

Shame and pain vanquished her. The executioner carried her, bent double, down the ladder of ignominy.

She did not work out the rest of her sentence ; by some means she made her escape from France and, going to London, the Last of the Valois lost her life by jumping out of a window to avoid arrest for debt. Beginning life as a beggar, thus she perished in poverty.

The hushed crowd broke up and went away. Two of the spectators accosted each other.

"Do you think, Maximilian, that it is really Countess Lamotte whom the fellow branded ?"

"They say so," replied the taller of the two young men.

"Like the rest, you will go away believing this was not some trick. They have paid some wretch who was to be branded anyway to play the fine lady's part. The only person really branded was the Queen."

The hearer laughed loudly and clapped hands for the jest, and looking round him, said :

"Good-bye, Robespierre !"

"Good-bye, Marat," and they parted.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## THE WEDDING.

ON the day of the execution, as the King came out of his study at noon, he was heard to dismiss the Count of Provence with these words :

"I am going to a wedding. I beg you not to speak any more about unhappy families ; it would be of bad omen for the new couple whom I love and cherish."

Provence frowned while smiling, and went to his own rooms.

The King passed through the ranks of courtiers, smiling or looking cold on such as he thought favorable to him or to the opposition in the recent trial.

In the Square Saloon sat the Queen, in full dress, surrounded by her ladies in waiting, with her gentlemen.

Pale under her thick rouge, she listened with affected attention to Princess Lamballe and Calonne who chatted with her. But she often darted a sidelong glance towards the door as if wanting to see one for whom she was eager and yet trembled to view.

"The King !" shouted one of the ushers.

In a heap of lace, glitter and embroideries, the monarch marched in, with his first look for his wife. She rose and took three steps to meet her lord, who condescendingly kissed her hand.

"You are miraculously handsome to-day," he said.

Sad was her smile, and her dim eye still sought for the absent point in vacancy.

"Are the young people here ?" asked the sovereign ; " I think it is about to strike twelve noon."

" Only Count Charny has arrived," was the royal lady's reply. " He waits in the gallery for your Majesty's order for him to come in."

The rouge flaked off in her violent effort to speak without emotion.



"Let him come," replied the King, without remarking the expressive silence following the words.

Several gentlemen left the ranks to obey the King, who presently said :

"There goes twelve ; the bride is late."

Charny, entering, caught these last words.

"Will your Majesty kindly excuse the unintended delay of Mdlle. Taverney ?" he said ; "since her father's death she has not quitted her room. She comes out for the first time this morning, and would have been here now but for a fainting fit."

"The dear girl loved her father so well," said the King, loudly ; "but as she meets with a good husband, we trust she will be comforted."

The Queen was listening, or rather she could not help hearing, without making any movement. A watcher while Charny spoke, would have marked that the blood fell from her forehead to her heart, like the tide going out.

The King suddenly lifted his head on remarking what a number of the clergy and nobility came into the hall.

"Has the order of banishment been sent Count Cagliostro, Lord Breteuil ?" he inquired.

A bird's sigh would have ruffled the silence.

"And do they not brand this Lamotte woman, who calls herself Valois, this day ?" went on the ruler loudly.

"That would be executed by this time," replied the Prime Minister.

The Queen's eye glittered as a murmur meant to be approbative, circulated.

"It will vex my lord cardinal to have this accomplice made a *woman of mark*," pursued the monarch with a tenacity of severity not recognized in him previous to this trial.

The term "accomplice," applied to one whom the Parliament had absolved, blasting the Parisians' idol, condemning a foremost Prince of the Church as a forger and robber, came from the speaker as a solemn challenge to the clergy, the politicians and the people, in support of his wife's honor.

Louis flashed his eye round with anger and majesty not seen in France since the Great Louis' eyes had closed in everlasting slumber.

Neither murmur nor assenting word hailed this vengeance of the King on those conspiring to injure royalty. Approaching his consort, he caught the hands she extended in deep thankfulness.

At this moment appeared at the gallery end M<sup>lle</sup>. Taverney, as white in face as in her attire, like a ghost, while her brother held her by the hand.

Her step was rapid, her look troubled and her bosom heaved; she neither heard nor saw; through her brother's hand came all her force and courage and it imparted direction.

The courtiers smiled as the bridal party came along. All the ladies fell in behind the Queen as all the men behind the King.

Bailiff Suffren, having George Charny by the hand, went towards Andrea and her giver-away, saluted them and mixed with the rest.

Andrea, like a galvanized corpse, saluted the King, while the beholders muttered their admiration at her beauty.

"You should have waited for the end of your mourning to make this marriage," said the King, taking her hand, "but the Queen and I purpose a tour through the kingdom and we wished this union celebrated before we started. So I take pleasure in signing your wedding contract this day, and see you united in my chapel. Salute the Queen, and thank her: for she has been good to you."

Marie Antoinette stood up as the bride came up to her, but all she saw was the white dress. Then the King handed the bride to Philip Baron Taverney, who gave his other hand to the Queen.

"To the chapel!" said the King loudly.

When the priest was speaking, the holy bell tinkling and the incense rising, Andrea mused:

"Strange! Beside me is the man whose mere name makes me swoon with pleasure. Had he come to ask my hand I must have fallen at his feet and begged his pardon for having sinned without knowing it and for having offspring before marriage—then, this man would have repulsed me. But now, he marries me, and asks my pardon. Oh, it is very strange!"

Thus the beloved of Gilbert became the wife of George

Oliver Charny : the mesmerist's victim was a countess and peeress of the realm.

She did not feel the ring slipped by Charny upon her finger. As the crowd broke up, the King said to the bride :

"The Queen expects you in her rooms to make you her wedding present."

"If she speaks to me about him," whispered Andrea to her brother : "if she compliments me, I shall die."

"Bear this trial," said Philip ; "if you die, you will be happier than me, for I long for death."

As if his mournful tone goaded her, Andrea mustered up fortitude and proceeded into the Queen's apartments.

Though it was June, a fire was burning in the royal cabinet, and yet she shivered.

Andrea trembled also, but with weakness, and felt like the criminal to whom the executioner is about to show the ax.

Between those two hearts words were superfluous. Any but Andrea might have supposed that the paper the sovereign held out to her was the donation of valuable property or the patent of a high post at court. The new countess guessed it was something else. In truth, this is what she read :

"ANDREA : You save me. My honor is restored by you and I owe you my life. In the name of that honor due to you, I vow to call you my sister. Try to see me without blushing. I place this pledge of my gratitude in your hands as the dowery I give. Your heart is the noblest of all hearts and it will find pleasure in the present I offer.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE of Lorraine and Austria."

Looking at the writer, Andrea saw that her eyes were swollen with tears. She slowly crossed the room to burn the note in the fire, and went out without articulating a syllable.

In the next room the countess so inflexible found her brother, who put her hand in Charny's, with the Queen, at the sill, beholding the doleful scene.

Charny went forth like the bridegroom of Death, who seemed to lead him by the hand. He glanced back at Marie Antoinette's pale face which faded away as he took one step

farther and farther. She believed the parting was forever.

At the palace gates Andrea stepped into one of the two post-chaise waiting: Charny was preparing to follow her, when his new countess said:

"I believe you are going into Picardy? I am going into the country where my mother died. Farewell!"

He bowed without objecting, and the horses carried away the wife alone.

"Do you stay with me to say that you are my enemy still?" asked Charny of Taverney.

"No, my lord," was Philip's reply, "my brother cannot be my enemy."

George shook his hand and went into the second chaise, departing.

Alone, Taverney wrung his hands in despair and said in a smothered voice:

"My God, dost Thou not reserve for those who do their duty on this earth some joy in heaven? But why should I speak of joy?" he added, bitterly glancing at the palace for the last time. "Those who may hope for another life must have some one to love on this earth. No one loves me: I cannot even have the felicity of wishing for death."

He darted to heaven the gentle reproach of a Christian whose faith was tottering, and disappeared like Charny and Andrea, in the whirl of that cyclone in which was to be hurled over a throne with many a love, reputation and glory.

It is the course of this storm that we have to follow, with all its alterations of lightning and gloom, but also with some lulls of calm and celestial pleasure in the work entitled: "**TAKING THE BASTILE.**"

**THE END.**







